

UPDATED
EDITION



Faith's Checkbook



Daily Devotional
PROMISES FOR TODAY

FOR WE WALK BY FAITH,
NOT BY SIGHT.
- 2 CORINTHIANS 5:7

CHARLES H.
SPURGEON

HAVE A blessed day every day
God bless Israel, Jews Jerusalem
Shalom

WATCHER
KAPTURE

I Love you many hugs from me to you

Faith's Checkbook

Kay W

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Promises for Today

C. A. Spurgeon

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Preface

A promise from God can very informatively be compared to a check made out to someone. It is given to the believer with the intent of giving some good thing to him. It is not meant for him to read it over quickly and then be done with it. No, he is to treat the promise as a reality, just as someone treats a check.

He is to take the promise and endorse it with his own name by personally receiving it as true. He is to accept it by faith as his own. He endorses his belief that God is true and that He is true as to this particular word of promise. He goes further, believing that he has the blessing in having the sure promise of it, and therefore he puts his name to it to testify to receiving the blessing.

Once this is done, he must believingly present the promise to the Lord, as someone presents a check at the counter of the bank. He must plead it by prayer, expecting to have it fulfilled. If he has come to heaven's bank at the right date, he will receive the promised amount at once. If the date should happen to be later, he must patiently wait until its arrival; but meanwhile, he can count the promise as money, for the bank is sure to pay when the due date arrives.

Some people fail to place the endorsement of faith upon the check, and so they get nothing. Others are negligent in presenting it, and these also receive nothing. This is not the fault of the promise, but of those who do not act upon it in a common sense, businesslike manner.

God has given no promise that He will not redeem. He does not offer hope that He will not fulfill. To help my brethren believe this, I have prepared this little volume.

The sight of the promises themselves is good for the eyes of faith, for the more we study the words of grace, the more grace we will obtain from the words. To the encouraging Scriptures I have added testimonies

of my own – the fruit of trial and experience. I believe all the promises of God, and I have personally tested and proved many of them. I have seen that they are true, for they have been fulfilled to me. This, I hope, will be encouraging to the young and will provide comfort to those who are older. One person's experience can be of the utmost use to another. This is why the man of God of old wrote, *I sought the Lord, and He answered me* (Psalm 34:4), and, *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him* (Psalm 34:6).

I began these daily portions when I was wading in the surf of controversy. Since then I have been cast into waters to swim in, which, but for God's upholding hand, would have proved to have been waters to drown in. I have endured tribulation from many beatings. Sharp bodily pain followed mental depression, and this was accompanied both by bereavement and affliction in the person of one as dear as life. The waters rolled in continually, wave upon wave. I do not mention this to get sympathy, but simply to let the reader see that I am not a dry-land sailor. I have crossed those oceans of difficulty and grief many times. I know the roll of the billows and the rush of the winds. The promises of God were never as precious to me as during this time. I never understood some of them until now. I had not reached the date at which they matured, for I was not mature enough myself to understand their meaning.

How much more wonderful the Bible is to me now than it was a few months ago! In obeying the Lord and bearing His reproach outside the camp (Hebrews 13:13), I have not received new promises, but the result is much the same to me as if I had done so, for the old promises have opened up to me with richer supply.

The Word of the Lord to His servant Jeremiah was especially sweet in my ears. It was his duty to speak to those who would not hear, or if they did hear, would not believe. He experienced the sorrow that comes from disappointed love and unwavering loyalty. He desired to turn his people from their errors, but he would not himself give up the way of the Lord.

There were words of deep sustaining power for him that kept his mind from failing where nature would have sunk without help. I have loved these and other such golden sentences of grace more than my necessary food, and with them I have enriched these pages.

Oh, that I might comfort some of my Master's servants! I have written out of my own heart with the intent of comforting their hearts. I would say to them in their trials: My brethren, God is good. He will not forsake you. He will carry you through. There is a promise prepared for your present emergencies, and if you will believe and plead it at the mercy seat through Jesus Christ, you will see the hand of the Lord stretched out to help you. Everything else will fail, but His word never will.

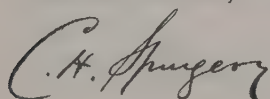
God has been so faithful to me in countless instances that I must encourage you to trust Him. I would be ungrateful to God and unkind to you if I did not do so.

May the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, inspire the people of the Lord with fresh faith! I know that all that I can say will be of no avail without His divine power, but under His reviving influence, even the humblest testimony will strengthen feeble knees and weak hands. God is glorified when His servants trust Him wholeheartedly. We cannot be too childlike with our heavenly Father. Our young ones do not ask any questions about our will or our power, but once they have received a promise from their father, they rejoice in anticipation of its fulfillment, never doubting that it is as certain as the sun.

May many readers, whom I may never see, discover the duty and delight of such childlike trust in God while they are reading the little portion that I have prepared for each day of the year.

For many years, several thousand of God's people have read my *Morning by Morning* and *Evening by Evening* devotionals, and many of them have been kind enough to write to me and acknowledge the benefit of those books. I hope this little book will be beneficial along with those volumes. These daily portions are gathered from a larger variety of topics, and they are all the more profitable because they deal with doctrine, experience, practice, and everything else. This book is a sweet dessert about promise only, and it must not interfere with the fuller meals. I hope it will excite a desire for you to embrace the entire Bible.

May our Lord Jesus accept this as my service for His sheep and lambs.
From His unworthy Servant,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "C. H. Spurgeon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, ornate initial "C".

January

January 1

The Bible's First Promise

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He will bruise you on the head, and you will bruise him on the heel. (Genesis 3:15)

*T*his is the first promise to fallen man. It contains the whole gospel and the essence of the covenant of grace. It has been in a large part fulfilled. The seed of the woman, even our Lord Jesus, was bruised in His heel, and it was a terrible bruising. How much more will be the final bruising of the serpent's head! This was virtually done when Jesus took away sin, vanquished death, and broke the power of Satan, but it awaits a more complete fulfillment at our Lord's second coming and in the day of judgment.

The promise stands to us as a prophecy that we will be afflicted by the powers of evil in this life, and thus bruised in our heel, but we will triumph in Christ, who sets His foot on the old serpent's head. Throughout this year, we may have to learn the first part of this promise by experience through the temptations of the devil and the unkindness of the ungodly, who are his seed. They may so bruise us that we might limp with our sore heel. However, let us grasp the second part of the text, and we will not be dismayed. By faith let us rejoice that we will still reign in Christ Jesus, the woman's seed.

January 2

Conquest to Victory

*The God of peace will soon crush Satan
under your feet. (Romans 16:20)*

*T*his promise appropriately follows that of yesterday. We are obviously to be conformed to our covenant Head, not only in His being bruised in His heel, but in His conquest of the evil one. The old dragon is even to be bruised under our feet. The Roman believers were grieved with strife in the church, but their God was *the God of peace* who gave them rest of soul. The archenemy tripped up the feet of the careless and deceived the hearts of the naive, but he was to get the worst of it and is to be trodden down by those whom he had troubled. This victory would not come to the people of God through their own skill or power, but God Himself would bruise Satan. Though it would be under their feet, yet the bruising would be from the Lord alone.

Let us bravely tread upon the tempter! Not only lesser spirits of evil, but the prince of darkness himself must go down before us. In unquestioning confidence in God, let us look for a quick victory. *Soon*. What a happy word! *Soon* we will set our foot on the old serpent! What a joy to crush evil! What dishonor to Satan to have his head bruised by human feet! By faith in Jesus, let us tread the tempter down.

January 3

Rest on a Promise

*The land on which you lie, I will give it to you
and to your descendants. (Genesis 28:13)*

A promise is of private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20). It does not belong to only one saint, but to all believers. If, my brother, you can in faith lie down upon a promise and take your rest upon it, it is yours. Where Jacob rested and spent the night, he took possession (Genesis 28:11-15). Stretching his weary body upon the ground, with the stones of that place for his pillows, he hardly imagined that he was entering into ownership of the land – yet he was. He saw in his dream that wondrous ladder that unites earth and heaven for all true believers, and certainly where the foot of the ladder stood, he had a right to the soil, for otherwise he could not reach the divine stairway. All the promises of God are “yes” and “amen” in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20), and as He is ours, every promise is ours if we will only lie down upon them in restful faith.

Come, weary one, and use your Lord’s words as your pillows. Lie down in peace (Psalms 4:8). Dream only of Him. Jesus is your ladder of light. See the angels coming and going to Him between your soul and your God, and be sure that the promise is your own God-given portion. See that it will not be robbery for you to take it to yourself as spoken specifically to you.

January 4

In Calm Repose

I . . . will make them lie down in safety. (Hosea 2:18)

*Y*es, the saints are to have peace. The verse from which this gracious word is taken speaks of peace *with the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky, and the creeping things of the ground* (Hosea 2:18). This is peace with earthly enemies, with mysterious evils, and with little annoyances! Any of these might keep us from lying down, but none of them will do so. The Lord will completely destroy those things that threaten His people: *I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land* (Hosea 2:18). Peace will be profound indeed when all the instruments of alarm are broken to pieces.

With this peace will come rest, for God gives sleep to His beloved (Psalm 127:2). Fully supplied and divinely calmed, believers lie down in quiet rest. This rest will be a safe one. It is one thing to lie down, but quite another to *lie down in safety*. We are brought to the land of promise, the house of the Father, the room of love, and the arms of Christ; certainly we can now *lie down in safety*. It is safer for a believer to lie down in peace than to sit up and worry.

He makes me lie down in green pastures (Psalm 23:2). We never really rest until the Comforter makes us lie down.

January 5

A Wonderful Guarantee

I will strengthen you. (Isaiah 41:10)

When called to serve or to suffer, we assess our strength, and we find it to be less than we thought and less than we need. However, we must not let our hearts sink within us while we have such a verse as this to fall back upon, for it guarantees us all that we can possibly need. God has omnipotent strength that He can share with us, and He promises to do so. He will be the food of our souls and the health of our hearts, and in this way He will give us strength. We cannot determine how much power God can put into someone. When divine strength comes, human weakness is no longer a hindrance.

Do we not remember times of labor and trial in which we received such special strength that we wondered at ourselves? In the midst of danger, we were calm; under bereavement, we embraced God's will; in slander, we were quiet; and in sickness, we were patient. The fact is that God gives unexpected strength when unusual trials come upon us. Cowards gain courage, the foolish are given wisdom, and the silent receive in that very hour what they should say (Luke 12:12). My own weakness makes me reluctant, but God's promise makes me brave.

Lord, strengthen me *according to Your word* (Luke 1:38).

January 6

Help from Without

Surely I will help you. (Isaiah 41:10)

*Y*esterday's promise secured us strength for what we have to do, but this promise guarantees us help in cases where we cannot act alone. The Lord says, *I will help you*. Strength within is supplemented by help without. God can raise us up allies in our warfare if it seems good in His sight. Even if He does not send us human assistance, He Himself will be at our side, and this is better still. Our great God is better than armies of human helpers.

His help is timely. *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble* (Psalm 46:1). His help is very wise. He knows how to give each person help that is proper and suitable for him. His help is most powerful, *for deliverance by man is in vain* (Psalm 108:12). His help is more than help, for He bears all the burden and supplies all the need. *The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?* (Hebrews 13:6).

Because God has already been our help, we can have confidence in Him for the present and the future. Our prayer is, *O Lord, be my helper* (Psalm 30:10). Our experience is, *The Spirit also helps our weakness* (Romans 8:26). Our expectation is, *I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth* (Psalm 121:1-2). Our song will soon be, *You have taken hold of my right hand* (Psalm 73:23).

January 7

Always Growing

You will see greater things than these. (John 1:50)

*T*his is spoken to a childlike believer who was ready to accept Jesus as the Son of God, the King of Israel, upon one convincing piece of argument. Those who are willing to see will see. It is because we shut our eyes that we become so sadly blind.

We have seen much already. The Lord has shown us great and unsearchable things, for which we praise His name, but there are greater truths in His Word, greater depths of experience, greater heights of fellowship, greater works of usefulness, and greater discoveries of power, love, and wisdom. We will see these things if we are willing to believe our Lord. The ability to invent false doctrine is destructive, but power to see the truth is a blessing. Heaven will be opened to us, the way there will be made clear to us in the Son of Man, and the angelic communion that goes on between the upper and lower kingdoms will be made more clear to us. Let us keep our eyes focused on spiritual things and expect to see more and more. Let us believe that our lives will not shrink down into nothing, but that we will be always growing, seeing greater and greater things until we behold the great God Himself and never again lose sight of Him.

January 8

Purity of Heart and Life

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they
will see God. (Matthew 5:8)*

*P*urity, especially purity of heart, is the main thing to be aimed at. We need to be made clean on the inside through the Spirit and the Word, and then we will be clean on the outside by consecration and obedience. There is a close connection between the affections and the understanding. If we love evil, we cannot understand that which is good. If the heart is wicked, the eye will be dim. How can those people see a holy God if they love unholy things?

What a privilege it is to see God here! A glimpse of Him is heaven below! In Christ Jesus, the pure in heart behold the Father. We see Him. We see His truth, His love, His purpose, His sovereignty, and His covenant character; yes, we see Him in Christ. But this is only realized as sin is kept out of the heart. Only those who pursue godliness can cry, *My eyes are continually toward the Lord* (Psalm 25:15). The desire of Moses, *I pray You, show me Your glory!* (Exodus 33:18), can only be fulfilled in us as we purify ourselves from all iniquity. *We will see Him just as He is* (1 John 3:2), and everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself (1 John 3:3). The enjoyment of present fellowship and the hope of seeing God are urgent motives for purity of heart and life. *Lord, make us pure in heart so that we can see You!*

January 9

Gaining by Giving

The generous man will be prosperous. (Proverbs 11:25)

*If I desire to prosper in my soul, I must not hoard up my possessions, but must distribute to the poor. To be greedy and miserly is the world's way to prosperity, but it is not God's way, for He says, *There is one who scatters, and yet increases all the more, and there is one who withholds what is justly due, and yet it results only in want* (Proverbs 11:24). Faith's way of gaining is by giving. I must try this again and again, and I can expect that as much prosperity as will be good for me will come to me as a gracious reward for a heart of generosity.*

Of course, I cannot be sure that I will grow rich. I will be prosperous, but not too prosperous. Too many riches might make me as awkward as obese people usually are and cause me the nausea of worldliness, and might even bring on a fatty degeneration of the heart. No, if I have enough fat to be healthy, I can rightly be satisfied; and if the Lord grants me that which is sufficient, I will be thoroughly content.

But there is a mental and spiritual prosperity that I would greatly desire, and this comes as the result of generous thoughts toward my God, His church, and my fellow men. Let me not be stingy so that I do not starve my heart. Let me be bountiful and generous, for in this I will be like my Lord. He gave Himself for me; how can I keep back anything from Him?

January 10

Divine Compensation

He who waters will himself be watered. (Proverbs 11:25)

*L*f I carefully consider others, God will consider me, and in some way or other He will compensate me. Let me consider the poor, and the Lord will consider me. Let me look after little children, and the Lord will treat me as His child. Let me feed His flock, and He will feed me. Let me water His garden, and He will make a watered garden of my soul. This is the Lord's own promise. It is my responsibility to fulfill the condition and then to expect its fulfillment.

I can care about myself until I grow sick. I can watch over my own feelings until I feel nothing. I can lament my own weakness until I grow almost too weak to lament. However, it would be far more profitable for me to become unselfish and to begin to care for the souls of those around me out of love to my Lord Jesus.

My tank is getting very low. No fresh rain comes to fill it. What should I do? I will pull up the plug and let its contents run out to water the withering plants around me. What do I see? My cistern seems to fill as the water flows. A secret spring is at work. While everything was stagnant, the fresh spring was sealed, but as my supply flows out to water others, the Lord considers me. Hallelujah!

January 11

Faith Sets the Bow

*It will come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth,
that the bow will be seen in the cloud. (Genesis 9:14)*

Clouds are plentiful enough, but we are not afraid that the whole world will be destroyed by a flood. We see the rainbow often enough to keep us from having such fear. The covenant that the Lord made with Noah stands firm, and we do not have any doubts about it. Why, then, should we think that the clouds of trouble, which now darken our sky, will end in our destruction? Let us dismiss such groundless and dishonoring fears.

Faith always sees the bow of God's covenant promise whenever we see clouds of affliction. God has a bow with which He can shoot out His arrows of destruction. But look – it is turned upward! It is a bow without an arrow or a string. It is a bow hung out for show, no longer used for war. It is a bow of many colors, expressing joy and delight, and not a bow red with the blood of slaughter or black with anger.

Let us be of good courage. God never so darkens our sky as to leave His covenant without a witness, and even if He did, we would trust Him since He cannot change or lie or in any other way fail to keep His covenant of peace. Unless the waters cover the entire earth again, we have no reason to doubt our God.

January 12

Loved unto the End

The Lord will not reject forever. (Lamentations 3:31)

God may seem to reject or cast us away for a little while, but not forever. A woman might leave off her pieces of jewelry for a few days, but she will not forget them or throw them away. It is not like the Lord to cast off those whom He loves, for *having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end* (John 13:1). Some people talk of being in grace and then out of it, as if they were like rabbits that run in and out of their burrows; but, indeed, this is not so. The Lord's love is a far more serious and abiding matter than this.

He chose us from eternity, and He will love us throughout eternity. He loved us so as to die for us, and we can therefore be sure that His love will never die. His honor is so wrapped up in the salvation of the believer that He can no more cast him off than He can cast off His own robes as the King of Glory. No! The Lord Jesus, as the Head, never casts off the members of His body. As a Husband, He never casts off His bride. Did you think you were cast off? Why did you think so poorly of the Lord who has pledged you to Himself?

Cast off such thoughts, and never let them lodge in your soul again. *God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew* (Romans 11:2). God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). He will not cast His own people away.

January 13

Never Cast Out

*The one who comes to Me I will certainly
not cast out. (John 6:37)*

*I*s there any instance of our Lord's casting out anyone who comes to Him? If there is, we would like to know about it; but there has been none, and there never will be. Among the lost souls in hell, there is not one who can say, "I went to Jesus, and He refused me." It is not possible that you or I would be the first to whom Jesus would break His word. Let us not entertain such a dreadful thought.

Suppose we go to Jesus now about the evils of today. We can be sure that He will not refuse to hear us or that He will cast us out. Those of us who have often been and those who have never gone before – let us go together, and we will see that He will not shut the door of His grace in the face of any of us.

This man receives sinners (Luke 15:2), but He does not push any away. We come to Him in weakness and sin, with trembling faith, small knowledge, and slender hope – but He does not cast us out. We come by prayer, and that prayer is broken. We come with confession, and that confession is faulty. We come with praise, and that praise is far short of His merits; yet He receives us. We come diseased, polluted, worn out, and worthless, but He will certainly not cast any of us out. Let us go again today to Him who never casts us out.

January 14

Rest Is a Gift

*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden,
and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28)*

*M*e who are saved find rest in Jesus. Those who are not saved will receive rest if they come to Him, for here He promises to give it. Nothing can be freer than a gift. Let us gladly accept what He gladly gives. You are not to buy it or borrow it, but to receive it as a gift. You labor under the whip of ambition, covetousness, lust, or anxiety. Jesus will set you free from this bondage and will give you rest. You are weighed down, yes, *heavy-laden* with sin, fear, care, remorse, and fear of death, but if you come to Him, He will take the burden away. He carried the crushing weight of our sin so that we no longer had to carry it. He made Himself the great Burden-bearer so that everyone who is burdened could cease from bowing down under the enormous pressure.

Jesus gives rest. It is true. Will you believe it? Will you put it to the test? Will you do so at once? Come to Jesus by leaving every other hope behind and by thinking of Him, believing God's testimony about Him, and trusting everything with Him. If you come to Him in this way, the rest that He will give you will be deep, safe, holy, and everlasting. He gives a rest that develops into heaven, and He gives it this day to all who come to Him.

January 15

Made Rich by Faith

For the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the afflicted perish forever. (Psalm 9:18)

*P*overty is a difficult heritage, but those who trust in the Lord are made rich by faith. They know that they are not forgotten by God, and although it might seem that they are overlooked in His providential distribution of good things, they look for a time when all this will be made right. Lazarus will not always lie among the dogs at the rich man's gate, but he will have his reward in Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:25).

Even now the Lord remembers His poor, yet precious, children. *Since I am afflicted and needy, let the Lord be mindful of me* (Psalm 40:17), said one of old, and it is the same way today. The godly poor have great expectations. They expect the Lord to provide them with all things necessary for this life and godliness. They expect to see things working for their good. They expect to have close fellowship with their Lord, who had *nowhere to lay His head* (Matthew 8:20). They look for His second coming and expect to share its glory. This expectation cannot perish, for it is laid up in Christ Jesus, who lives forever; and because He lives, it will live also. The poor saint sings many songs that the rich sinner cannot understand. Therefore, when we have meager provisions below, let us think of the royal table above.

January 16

Even the Faintest Call

And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered. (Joel 2:32)

Why do I not call on His name? Why do I run to this neighbor and that friend when God is so near and will hear my faintest call? Why do I sit down and devise schemes and invent plans? Why do I not at once cast myself and my burden upon the Lord? Straightforward is the best and most direct way to run, so why do I not run at once to the living God? I will look in vain for deliverance anywhere else, but with God I will find it, for here I have His royal *will* to make it sure.

I do not need to ask whether I am permitted to call on Him or not, for that word *whoever* is a very wide and comprehensive one. *Whoever* means me, for it means anybody and everybody who calls upon God. I will therefore follow the leading of the text and at once call upon the glorious Lord who has made such a generous promise.

My case is urgent, and I do not see how I am to be delivered – but I do not need to figure that out. He who makes the promise will find out ways and means of keeping it. I am simply to obey His commands, not to give Him advice. I am His servant, not His lawyer. I call upon Him, and He will deliver me.

January 17

A Man without Fear

He said, "Certainly I will be with you." (Exodus 3:12)

Of course, if the Lord sent Moses on an errand, He would not let him go alone. The tremendous risk involved and the great power required would make it ridiculous for God to send a poor lone Hebrew to confront the mightiest king in all the world and then leave him to himself. It could not be imagined that a wise God would match poor Moses against Pharaoh and the enormous forces of Egypt. Therefore God says, *Certainly I will be with you*, as if it were out of the question that He would send him alone.

In my case, also, the same rule will hold true. If I go upon the Lord's errand with a simple reliance upon His power and a single eye to His glory, it is certain that He will be with me. His sending me commits Him to back me up. Is not this enough? What more could I want? If all the angels and archangels were with me, I might fail; but if God is with me, I must succeed. Only let me be certain to act worthily toward this promise. I must not go timidly, halfheartedly, carelessly, or presumptuously. What manner of person should he be who has God with him! In such company, it is my duty to be courageous and, like Moses, go in unto Pharaoh without fear.

January 18

Christ and His Children

*If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,
He will see His offspring. (Isaiah 53:10)*

Our Lord Jesus did not die in vain. His death was sacrificial. He died as our substitute because death was the penalty of our sins. Because His substitution was accepted by God, He has saved those for whom He made Himself a sacrifice. By death, He became like the grain of wheat that brings forth much fruit. There must be a succession of children unto Jesus. He is the *Everlasting Father* (Isaiah 9:6) He will say, *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me* (Isaiah 8:18).

A man is honored through his sons, and Jesus has His quiver full of these arrows of the mighty (Psalm 127:5). A man is represented in his children, and so is Christ in Christians. In a man's children, his life seems to be prolonged and extended, and so is the life of Jesus continued in believers.

Jesus lives, for He sees His seed. He sets His eye on us, He delights in us, and He recognizes us as the fruit of the anguish of His soul (Isaiah 53:11). Let us be glad that our Lord does not fail to enjoy the result of His great sacrifice, and that He will never cease to feast His eyes upon the harvest of His death. Those eyes that once wept for us are now viewing us with pleasure. Yes, He looks upon those who are looking unto Him. Our eyes meet! What a joy this is!

January 19

Mouth Confession and Heart Belief

If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

There must be confession with the mouth. Have I made it? Have I openly declared my faith in Jesus as the Savior whom God has raised from the dead, and have I done it in God's way? Let me honestly answer this question.

There must also be belief with the heart. Do I sincerely believe in the risen Lord Jesus? Do I trust in Him as my only hope of salvation? Is this trust from my heart? Let me answer this as before God.

If I can truly claim that I have both confessed Christ and believed in Him, then I am saved. The text does not say that it might be so, but it is plain as day and clear as the sun in the heavens: *You will be saved.* As a believer in Jesus and as one who confesses faith in Him, I can lay my hand on this promise and plead it before the Lord God at this moment – and throughout my life, in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment.

I must be saved from the guilt of sin, the power of sin, the punishment of sin, and ultimately from the very existence of sin. God has said it: *You will be saved.* I believe it. I will be saved. I am saved. Glory be to God forever and ever!

January 20

The Overcomer

To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God. (Revelation 2:7)

*N*o man should turn his back in the day of battle or refuse to go to the holy war. We must fight if we would reign, and we must continue the warfare until we overcome every enemy, or else this promise is not for us since it is only for *him who overcomes*. We are to overcome the false prophets who have come into the world, along with all the evils that accompany their teaching. We are to overcome our own weakness of heart and tendency to turn away from our first love. Read all of the Spirit's word to the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7).

If by grace we win the day, as we will if we truly follow our conquering Leader, then we will be admitted to the very center of the paradise of God. We will be permitted to pass by the cherub and his flaming sword and come to that guarded tree from which if a man eat, he will live forever (Genesis 3:22). We will therefore escape that endless death that is the result of sin, and we will gain that everlasting life that is the seal of innocence and the outgrowth of immortal principles of Godlike holiness.

Take courage! To flee the conflict will be to lose the joys of the new and better Eden, but to fight unto victory is to walk with God in paradise.

January 21

God's Enemies Will Bow

The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord. (Exodus 7:5)

*T*he ungodly world is difficult to teach. Egypt did not know God, and therefore dared to set up its idols and even ventured to ask, *Who is the Lord?* (Exodus 5:2). Yet the Lord intends to break proud hearts, whether they are willing or not. When His judgments thunder over their heads, darken their skies, destroy their harvests, and slay their sons, they begin to understand a little of God's power. There will still be such things done in the earth that will bring unbelievers to their knees. Let us not be dismayed because of their blasphemies, for the Lord can take care of His own name, and He will do so in a very powerful way.

The salvation of His own people was another mighty way of making Egypt know that the God of Israel was the living and true God. No Israelite died by any of the ten plagues. None of the chosen seed were drowned in the Red Sea. Even so, the salvation of the elect and the sure glorification of all true believers will make the most obstinate of God's enemies acknowledge Him.

Oh, that His convincing power would go forth by His Holy Spirit in the preaching of the gospel until all nations will bow at the name of Jesus and call Him Lord (Philippians 2:10-11)!

January 22

Christian Liberty

*How blessed is he who considers the helpless; the Lord
will deliver him in a day of trouble. (Psalm 41:1)*

*I*t is a Christian's duty to think about the helpless and the poor and to let them lie on our hearts, for Jesus put them with us and near us when He said, *You always have the poor with you* (Matthew 26:11).

Many people give their money to the poor in a hurry and without thought. Many more give nothing at all. This precious promise belongs to those who consider the poor, look into their case, devise plans for their benefit, and considerately carry them out. We can do more by care than by cash, and we can often do the most good by combining the two together. To those who consider the poor, the Lord promises His own consideration in times of distress. He will bring us out of trouble if we help others when they are in trouble. We will receive very amazing providential help if the Lord sees that we try to provide for others. We will have a time of trouble no matter how generous we may be, but if we are charitable, we can put in a claim for special deliverance. The Lord will not deny His own word and promise. Stingy, grouchy people might help themselves, but the Lord will help considerate and generous believers. May the Lord do unto you as you have done unto others. Empty your pockets.

January 23

A Completed Sacrifice

He will lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf. (Leviticus 1:4)

*L*f by laying his hand on the bullock, it became the offerer's sacrifice, how much more will Jesus become ours by laying on the hand of faith?

My faith doth lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.¹

If a bullock could be accepted for someone to make atonement for him, how much more will the Lord Jesus be our full and all-sufficient propitiation? Some quarrel with the great truth of substitution, but as for us, it is our hope, our joy, our boast, and our all. Jesus is accepted for us to make atonement for us, and we are accepted *in the Beloved* (Ephesians 1:6). Let the reader take care at once to lay his hand on the Lord's completed sacrifice, so that by accepting it he can obtain the benefit of it. If you have done so before, do it again. If you have never done so, put out your hand without a moment's delay. Jesus is yours now if you will have Him. Lean on Him; lean hard on Him, and He is yours beyond all question. If you have true faith in Christ, you are reconciled to God, your sins are blotted out, and you are the Lord's.

1 Isaac Watts, "Not all the blood of beasts."

January 24

Care of Our Feet

He keeps the feet of His godly ones. (1 Samuel 2:9)

The way is slippery and our feet are feeble, but the Lord will keep our feet. If we give ourselves up by obedient faith to be His holy ones, He Himself will be our guardian. Not only will He command His angels to keep us, but He Himself will preserve us in our ways.

He will keep our feet from falling so that we do not defile our garments, wound our souls, and cause the enemy to blaspheme. He will keep our feet from wandering so that we do not go into paths of error, ways of foolishness, or the ways of the world. He will keep our feet from swelling through weariness or from blistering because of the roughness and length of the way (Deuteronomy 8:4). He will keep our feet from wounds; our shoes will be iron and brass (Deuteronomy 33:25), so that even though we tread on the edge of the sword or on deadly serpents, we will not bleed or be poisoned. He will also pluck our feet out of the net (Psalms 25:15). We will not be entangled by the deceit of our malicious and scheming enemies.

With such a promise as this, let us run without weariness and walk without fear (Isaiah 40:31). He who keeps our feet will do so effectively.

January 25

He Acts on Honest Confession

*He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned,
and perverted that which was right, and it profited
me not; he will deliver his soul from going into the pit,
and his life will see the light. (Job 33:27-28 KJV)*

*T*his is a word of truth, gathered from the experience of a man of God, and it is equivalent to a promise. What the Lord has done, and is doing, He will continue to do while the world stands. The Lord will receive into His arms all who come to Him sincerely confessing their sin; in fact, He is always on the lookout to discover any who are in trouble because of their faults.

Can we not endorse the language used here? Have we not sinned personally and must admit that we have sinned? Have we not sinned willfully, having distorted that which is right? Have we not sinned so as to discover that there is no profit in our sin, but rather an eternal loss? Let us, then, go to God with this honest acknowledgment. He asks no more. We can do no less.

Let us plead His promise in the name of Jesus. He will deliver us from the pit of hell that opens wide for us. He will grant us life and light. Why should we despair? Why should we even doubt? The Lord does not mock those who are humble. He means what He says. The guilty can be forgiven. Those who deserve execution can receive free pardon.

Lord, we confess, and we ask You to forgive!

January 26

God Routs Fear

*There is no omen against Jacob, nor is there any
divination against Israel. (Numbers 23:23)*

*T*his verse should cut up root and branch of all silly, superstitious fears! Even if there were any truth in witchcraft and omens, they could not affect the people of the Lord. Devils cannot curse those whom God blessed.

Ungodly men like Balaam might cunningly plot the overthrow of the Lord's Israel, but even with all their secrecy and shrewdness, they are doomed to fail. Their powder is damp; the edge of their sword is dull. They gather together, but since the Lord is not with them, they gather together in vain. We can sit still and let them weave their nets, for we will not be taken in them. Though they call in the aid of Beelzebub and employ all his devious devices, it will avail them nothing. The spells will not work and the divination will not harm them.

What a blessing this is! How it quiets the heart! God's Jacobs wrestle with God, but no one will wrestle with them and prevail, for God's Israels will prevail against them. We do not need to fear the fiend himself, nor any of those secret enemies whose words are full of deceit and whose plans are deep and unfathomable. They cannot hurt those who trust in the living God. Through Christ, we defy the devil and all his legions.

January 27

Precious Repentance

There you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done. (Ezekiel 20:43)

*W*hen we are accepted of the Lord and are standing in the place of favor, peace, and safety, then we are led to repent of all our failures and misdeeds toward our gracious God. Repentance is so precious that we can call it a diamond of the finest cut, and this is sweetly promised to the people of God as one of the most sanctifying results of salvation. He who accepts repentance also gives repentance. He does not give it out of the box of bitter herbs (Numbers 9:11), but from among the wafers made with honey on which He feeds His people (Exodus 16:31). A sense of blood-bought pardon and of undeserved mercy is the best way to dissolve a heart of stone.

Are we feeling hard-hearted? Let us think of covenant love, and then we will leave sin, mourn sin, and abhor sin. Yes, we will detest ourselves for sinning against such infinite love. Let us come to God with this promise of repentance and ask Him to help us to remember, repent, regret, and return. Oh, that we could enjoy the softening influence of holy sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10)! What a relief a flood of tears would be!

*Lord, strike the rock, or speak to the rock,
and cause the waters to flow!*

January 28

Tears Will Cease

*He will wipe away every tear from
their eyes. (Revelation 21:4)*

*Y*es, we will come to this point if we are believers. Sorrow will cease and tears will be wiped away. This is the world of weeping, but it passes away. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, as the first verse of this chapter says. Therefore, there will be nothing to weep over concerning the Fall and its consequent miseries. Read the second verse and notice how it speaks of the bride and her marriage. The Lamb's wedding is a time for immeasurable pleasure, and tears would be out of place. The third verse says that God Himself will dwell among men, and certainly at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11), and tears can no longer flow.

What will our condition be when there will be no more sorrow, crying, or pain (Revelation 21:4)? This will be more glorious than we can now imagine. O eyes that are red with weeping, cease your scalding flow, for in a little while you will know no more tears! No one can wipe tears away like the God of love, but He is coming to do it. *Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning* (Psalm 30:5).

*Come, Lord, and do not delay, for now
both men and women still weep!*

January 29

Obedience Brings Blessing

Be careful to listen to all these words which I command you, so that it may be well with you and your sons after you forever, for you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 12:28)

*T*hough salvation is not by the works of the law, yet the blessings that are promised for obedience are not denied to the faithful servants of God. Our Lord took away the curses when He was made a curse for us, but no words of blessing have been repealed.

We are to notice and listen to the revealed will of the Lord, giving our attention not only to portions of it, but to *all these words*. There must be no picking and choosing, but we must have an impartial respect for all that God has commanded. This is the road of blessedness for the Father and for His children. The Lord's blessing is upon His chosen to the third and fourth generation. If they walk uprightly before Him, He will make all people know that they are a seed whom the Lord has blessed. No blessing can come to us or to our family through dishonesty or duplicity. The ways of worldly conformity and unholiness cannot bring good to us or to those whom we love. It will go well with us when we go well before God. If integrity does not make us prosper, dishonesty and deceit will not. That which gives pleasure to God will bring pleasure to us.

January 30

A Heavenly Escort

*Behold, I am with you and will keep you
wherever you go. (Genesis 28:15)*

Do we need God's mercies when we travel? Here are some good ones: God's presence and preservation. We need both of these wherever we are, and we will have them wherever we go if we go at the call of duty and not merely according to our own desire. Why should we think that moving to another country is a sorrowful necessity when it is laid upon us by the divine will? In all lands, the believer is equally a pilgrim and a stranger, and yet the Lord is His dwelling place in all places, just as He has been to His saints in all generations. We might miss the protection of an earthly monarch, but when God says He will keep us, we are not in any real danger. This is a blessed passport for a traveler and a heavenly escort for an emigrant.

Jacob had never left his father's house before. He had been a mother's boy and not an adventurer like his brother. Yet he went abroad, and God went with him. He did not have much luggage and had no one to accompany him, yet no prince ever journeyed with a nobler bodyguard. Even while he slept in the open field, angels watched over him and the Lord God spoke to him. If the Lord tells us to go, let us say with our Lord Jesus, *Get up, let us go from here* (John 14:31).

January 31

God Always Hears

My God will hear me. (Micah 7:7)

*F*riends may be unfaithful, but the Lord will not turn away from the gracious soul. On the contrary, He will hear all its desires. The prophet says, *Keep the doors of Your mouth from her that lieth in Your bosom. . . . A man's enemies are the men of his own house (Micah 7:5-6 KJV)*. This is a miserable state of affairs, but even in such a case the Best Friend remains true, and we can tell Him all our troubles.

Our wisdom is to look unto the Lord and not to quarrel with others. If our loving appeals are disregarded by our relatives, let us wait upon the God of our salvation, for He will hear us. He will hear us all the more because of the unkindness and oppression of others, and we will soon have reason to say, *Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy (Micah 7:8)*.

Because God is the living God, He can hear. Because He is a loving God, He will hear. Because He is our covenant God, He has pledged Himself to hear us. If we can speak of Him as "my God," we can with absolute certainty say, *My God will hear me*. Come, then, O bleeding heart, and let your sorrows be told to the Lord your God! I will bow my knee in secret and inwardly whisper, *My God will hear me*.

February

February 1

Never Despair

*But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness
will rise with healing in its wings. (Malachi 4:2)*

Fulfilled once in the first coming of our glorious Lord, with an even fuller fulfillment in His second coming, this gracious word is also for daily use. Do the days seem dark to you? Do the nights deepen into an even denser blackness? Still let us not despair, for the sun will yet rise. When the night is darkest, dawn is nearest.

The sun that will arise is of no ordinary sort. It is the Sun – the Sun of Righteousness, whose every ray is holiness. He who comes to comfort us comes by way of justice as well as of mercy, and without breaking the Law, He comes to save us from that Law. Jesus displays the holiness of God as much as His love. Our deliverance, when it comes, will be safe because it is righteous.

The question we should ask is, “Do we fear the name of the Lord? Do we reverence the living God and walk in His ways?” If so, then the night will be short for us, and when the morning comes, all the sickness and sorrow of our soul will be over forever. Light, warmth, joy, and clearness of vision will come, and healing of every disease and distress will follow.

Has Jesus risen upon us? Let us sit in the sun. Has He hidden His face? Let us wait for His rising. He will shine forth as surely as the sun.

February 2

Grow Up

*And you will go forth and skip about like
calves from the stall. (Malachi 4:2)*

When the sun shines, the sick leave their rooms and walk outside to breathe the fresh air. When the sun brings spring and summer, the cattle leave their stalls and seek pasture on the higher Alps. In the same way, when we have conscious fellowship with our Lord, we leave the room of dreariness and walk abroad in the fields of holy confidence. We ascend to the mountains of joy and feed on the sweet pasture that grows nearer to heaven than the food of carnal men.

To *go forth* and to *skip about* is a double promise. O my soul, be eager to enjoy both blessings! Why should you be a prisoner? Arise, and walk at liberty. Jesus says that His sheep *will go in and out and find pasture* (John 10:9). *Go forth*, then, and feed in the rich meadows of unlimited love.

Why remain an infant in grace? Grow up and *skip about*. Young calves grow fast, especially if they are stall-fed, and you have the finest care from your Redeemer. *Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 3:18). Do not be impoverished or restricted. The Sun of Righteousness has risen upon you. Answer to His beams as the buds respond to the natural sun. Open your heart. Develop and grow up into Him in all things.

February 3

He Freely Gives

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered
Him over for us all, how will He not also with
Him freely give us all things? (Romans 8:32)*

*I*f this is not a promise in form, it is a promise in fact. Indeed, it is more than one promise; it is a conglomerate of promises. It is a mass of rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, with a nugget of gold for their setting. It is a question that can never be answered so as to cause us any anxiety of heart. What can the Lord deny us after giving us Jesus? If we need all things in heaven and earth, He will give them to us, for if there had been a limit anywhere, He would have kept back His own Son.

What do I need today? I only have to ask for it. I can seek earnestly, but not as if I had to use pressure and try to force an unwilling gift from the Lord's hand – for He will give freely. Of His own bounty He gave us His own Son. Certainly no one would have suggested such a gift to Him. No one would have dared to ask for it. It would have been too presumptuous. He freely gave His only begotten Son, and can you not trust your heavenly Father to give you anything, and even to give you everything? Your poor prayer would have no force with God if force were needed, but His love, like a spring, rises of itself and overflows for the supply of all your needs.

February 4

He Will Return

*I will not leave you as orphans; I will
come to you. (John 14:18)*

He left us, yet we are not left as orphans. He did not leave us comfortless. He is our comfort, and He is gone, but we are not comfortless. Our comfort is that He will come to us, and this is consolation enough to sustain us through His prolonged absence. Jesus is already on His way. He says, *I am coming quickly* (Revelation 22:12): He rides quickly toward us. He says that He will come, and no one can prevent His coming, or even delay it for a quarter of an hour. He specifically says, *I will come to you*, and so He will. His coming is specifically to and for His own people. This is meant to be their present comfort while they mourn that the Bridegroom does not yet appear.

When we lose the joyful sense of His presence, we mourn, but we do not need to sorrow as if there were no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Our Lord in a little wrath has hid Himself from us for a moment, but He will return in full kindness (Isaiah 54:8). He leaves us in a sense, but only in a sense. When He leaves, He leaves a pledge behind that He will return. O Lord, come quickly! There is no life in this earthly existence if You are gone. We long for the return of Your sweet smile. When will You come unto us? We are sure You will appear, but be like a deer, or a young hart, in coming unto us. *Do not delay, O my God* (Psalms 40:17).

February 5

Justice Satisfied

When I see the blood I will pass over you. (Exodus 12:13)

*M*y own sight of the precious blood is for my comfort, but it is the Lord's sight of it that secures my safety. Even when I am unable to see it, the Lord looks at it and passes over me because of it. If I am not as content as I should be because my faith is dim, yet I am just as safe because the Lord's eye is not dim, and He sees the blood of the great Sacrifice with a steady gaze. What a joy is this!

The Lord sees the deep inner meaning, the infinite fullness of all that is meant by the death of His dear Son. He sees it with a restful memory of justice satisfied and all His incomparable attributes glorified. He saw creation in its progress and said that *it was very good* (Genesis 1:31), but what does He say of redemption in its completeness? What does He say of the obedience even unto death of His well-beloved Son? No one can describe His delight in Jesus. No words can describe His rest in the sweet savor that Jesus presented when He offered Himself without spot unto God (Hebrews 9:14).

We now rest in calm security. We have God's sacrifice and God's Word to create in us a sense of perfect security. He will and He must pass over us, because He did not spare our glorious Substitute. Justice joins hands with love to provide everlasting salvation for all who are sprinkled in the blood of the Lamb (1 Peter 1:2).

February 6

Blessing in the City

All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the Lord your God: "Blessed will you be in the city." (Deuteronomy 28:2-3)

The city is full of care, and he who has to go there every day finds it to be a place of great wear and tear. It is full of noise, commotion, hurried activity, and hectic drudgery. It has many temptations, losses, and worries. But to go there with the divine blessing takes the edge off its difficulty. To remain there with that blessing is to find pleasure in its duties and strength equal to its demands.

A blessing in the city might not make us great, but it will keep us good. It might not make us rich, but it will keep us honest. Whether we are city workers, clerks, managers, merchants, or government officials, the city will provide us opportunities for usefulness. It is good fishing where there are schools of fish, and it is hopeful to work for our Lord amid the rushing crowds. We might prefer the quiet of a country life, but if called to the city, we can certainly prefer it because there is room for our zeal.

Today let us expect good things because of this promise, and let our concern be to have an open ear to the voice of the Lord and a ready hand to carry out His will. Obedience brings the blessing. *There is great reward* in keeping His commandments (Psalm 19:11).

February 7

Return from Backsliding

*If you return to the Almighty, you
will be restored. (Job 22:23)*

*I*n this sentence, Eliphaz spoke of a great truth that is the summary of many inspired Bible verses. Reader, has sin pulled you down? Have you become broken down? Has the hand of the Lord gone out against you so that you are poor in possessions and broken down in spirit? Was it your own foolishness that brought upon you all this ruin? Then the first thing to do is to return to the Lord. With deep repentance and sincere faith, find your way back from your backsliding. It is your duty, for you have turned away from Him whom you professed to serve. It is wise for you to do so, for you cannot strive against Him and succeed. It is what you should immediately do, for what He has done is nothing compared to what He might yet do in the way of chastisement, since He is Almighty to punish.

See what a promise invites you! *You will be restored.* No one but the Almighty can set up the fallen pillars and restore the unsteady walls of your condition, but He can and will do it if you return to Him. Do not delay. Your crushed mind may completely fail you if you continue to rebel, but wholehearted confession will help you, and humble faith will console you. Do this, and all will be well.

February 8

Joyful Security

*I will uphold you with My righteous
right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*

*F*ear of falling is prudent. To take foolish risks is not a sign of wisdom. There are times when we feel that we will fall unless we have a very special support. Here we have it. God's right hand is a great thing to lean upon. It is not just His hand, though it keeps heaven and earth in their places, but it is His right hand. It is His power united with skill, His power where it is most capable.

This is not all, though, for it is written, *I will uphold you with My righteous right hand*. The hand that He uses to maintain His holiness and to carry out His royal commands will be stretched out to hold up those who trust in Him. Our danger is real, but our security brings joy. Devils cannot throw down the person whom God upholds.

Our feet might be weak, but God's right hand is almighty. The road might be rough, but He who upholds us is all-powerful. We can boldly go forward. We will not fall. Let us lean continually where all things lean. God will not withdraw His strength, for His righteousness is there as well. He will be faithful to His promise and faithful to His Son, and therefore He will be faithful to us. How happy we should be! Are we not so?

February 9

The Dross Purged

And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them; I will say, "They are My people," and they will say, "The Lord is my God." (Zechariah 13:9)

*G*race transforms us into precious metal, and then the fire and the furnace follow as a necessary consequence. Do we hesitate at this? Would we rather be considered worthless so that we could enjoy rest, like the stones of the field? This would be to choose the part of little worth, like Esau taking the pottage and giving up the covenant portion. *No, Lord; we will gladly be thrown into the furnace rather than be cast out from Your presence!*

The fire only refines silver and gold; it does not destroy it. We are to be brought through the fire, not left in it. The Lord values His people, and therefore He takes the effort to purge away their dross. If we are wise, we will welcome the refining process rather than decline it. Our prayer will be that our alloy may be taken from us rather than that we would be withdrawn from the refining fire.

O Lord, You test us indeed! We are ready to melt under the fierceness of the flame. This is Your way, Lord, and Your way is best. Sustain us under the trial and complete the process of our purifying, and we will be Yours forever and ever.

February 10

A Constant Witness

*For you will be a witness for Him to all men of
what you have seen and heard. (Acts 22:15)*

Paul was chosen to see and hear the Lord speaking to him out of heaven. This divine election was a high privilege for him, but it was not intended to end with him. It was meant to have an influence upon others, even upon all people. It is to Paul that Europe owes the gospel even today.

It is our duty to be witnesses as we are able of that which the Lord has revealed to us, and it is at our peril that we hide the precious revelation. First, we must see and hear, or we will have nothing to tell, but when we have done so, we must be eager to bear our testimony. It must be personal: *You will be*. It must be for Christ: *You will be a witness for Him*. It must be constant and all-consuming. We are to be this above all other things and to the exclusion of many other matters. Our witness must not be to a select few who will cheerfully receive us, but to *all men* – to all whom we can reach, young or old, rich or poor, good or bad. We must never be silent like those who are possessed by a mute spirit, for the text before us is a command and a promise, and we must not miss it – *You will be a witness*.

"You are My witnesses," declares the Lord (Isaiah 43:10).

February 11

Are the Children In?

I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants. (Isaiah 44:3)

Our dear children do not have the Spirit of God by nature, as we clearly see. We see much in them that makes us fear as to their future, and this drives us to agonizing prayer. When a son becomes especially wicked, we cry with Abraham, *Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!* (Genesis 17:18). We would rather see our daughters be like Hannah than to be queens. This verse should greatly encourage us. It follows the words, *Do not fear, O Jacob My servant* (Isaiah 44:2), and it may well banish our fears.

The Lord will give His Spirit. He will give it plentifully, pouring it out. He will give it effectively so that it will be a real and eternal blessing. Under this divine outpouring, our children will come forward, and *This one will say, 'I am the Lord's'; and that one will call on the name of Jacob* (Isaiah 44:5).

This is one of those promises concerning which the Lord will be inquired of. Should we not, at set times and in a distinct manner, pray for our children and grandchildren? We cannot give them new hearts, but the Holy Spirit can, and He can easily be asked to do so. The great Father takes pleasure in the prayers of fathers and mothers. Do we have any dear ones outside the ark? Let us not rest until they are safely shut in with us by the Lord's own hand (Genesis 7:16).

February 12

God Delights to Give

The Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. (Genesis 13:14-15)

A special blessing for a memorable occasion. Abram had settled a family dispute. He had said, *Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers* (Genesis 13:8). Therefore, he received the blessing that belongs to peacemakers. The Lord and giver of peace delights to manifest His grace to those who seek peace and pursue it. If we desire closer communion with God, we must keep closer to the ways of peace.

Abram had behaved very generously to his kinsman, giving him his choice of the land. If we deny ourselves for the sake of peace, the Lord will more than make it up to us. The patriarch can claim the land as far as he can see, and we can do the same by faith. Abram had to wait until the land was actually possessed by his descendants, but the Lord deeded the land to him and his posterity. Unlimited blessings belong to us by covenant gift. All things are ours. When we please the Lord, He makes us to look everywhere and see all things as our own, whether things present or things to come. All are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's (1 Corinthians 3:23).

February 13

Blessed in the Field

Blessed will you be in the country. (Deuteronomy 28:3)

*I*saac was blessed in this way when he walked in the field in the evening to meditate (Genesis 24:63). How often has the Lord met us when we have been alone! The hedges and the trees can bear witness to our joy. We look for such blessedness again.

Boaz was blessed in the country, in the field, when he reaped his harvest and his workmen met him with blessings (Ruth 2:4). May the Lord prosper all who drive the plow! Every farmer can take this promise to God, if indeed he obeys the voice of the Lord God.

We go to the field to labor as our father Adam did, and since the curse fell on the soil through the sin of the first Adam, it is a great comfort to find a blessing through the second Adam.

We go to the field for exercise, and we are happy in the belief that the Lord will bless that exercise and give us health, which we will use for His glory.

We go to the field to study nature, and there is nothing in the knowledge of the visible creation that cannot be sanctified to the highest uses by the divine blessing.

We have at last to go to the field to bury our dead. Yes, others will in their turn take us to God's acre in the field, but we are blessed, whether weeping at the tomb or sleeping in it.

February 14

Mercy to the Undeserving

*He who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness
will surround him. (Psalm 32:10)*

What a pleasant reward of trust! *O Lord, grant it to me in its fullness!* More than anyone, the one who trusts in the Lord feels himself to be a sinner, and behold, mercy, or lovingkindness, is prepared for him! He knows that he does not deserve it, but mercy comes in and keeps house for him in a generous way. *O Lord, give me this mercy, even as I trust in You!*

Observe what a bodyguard you have! Just as a prince is surrounded by soldiers, so you are surrounded by mercy. Before and behind, and on all sides, these mounted guards of grace ride. We dwell in the center of the system of mercy, for we dwell in Christ Jesus.

What an atmosphere you breathe! Just as the air surrounds you, so the mercy of your Lord surrounds you. To the wicked there are many sorrows, but to you there are so many mercies that your sorrows are not worth mentioning. David says, *Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart* (Psalm 32:11). In obedience to this precept, my heart will triumph in God, and I will proclaim my gladness. *I will go about Your altar, O Lord, that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders* (Psalm 26:6-7).

*As You have surrounded me with mercy, I will also surround
Your altars, O my God, with songs of thanksgiving!*

February 15

Ever Mindful

*The Lord has been mindful of us; He
will bless us. (Psalm 115:12)*

L can set my seal to that verse. Can you do the same? Yes, the Lord has thought of us, provided for us, comforted us, delivered us, and guided us. In all the movements of His providence, He has been mindful of us, never overlooking our humble concerns and activities. His mind has been filled with thoughts of us – that is the other form of the word *mindful*. This has been the case all along and without a single break. At certain times, however, we have more clearly seen this mindfulness, and we can remember them at this hour with overflowing gratitude. Yes, yes – *the Lord has been mindful of us*.

The next sentence is a logical inference from the previous one. Since God does not change, He will continue to be mindful of us in the future, just as He has been in the past. His mindfulness is virtually the same as His blessing us. We have here not only the conclusion of reason, but the declaration of inspiration. We have it on the Holy Spirit's authority: *He will bless us*. This means great things and unsearchable. The very indistinctness of the promise indicates its infinite reach. God will bless us after His own divine manner, and will do so forever and ever. Therefore, let us each say, *Bless the Lord, O my soul* (Psalm 103:1).

February 16

You Deal with God

I will not execute My fierce anger; I will not destroy Ephraim again. For I am God and not man. (Hosea 11:9)

*I*n this verse, the Lord makes known His refraining mercies. Maybe you are now under God's heavy displeasure, and everything seems to threaten His speedy judgment. Let this verse keep you from despair. The Lord now invites you to consider your ways and confess your sins. If He had been a man, He would have cut you off long ago. If He were now to act after the manner of men, it would be a word and a strike and then there would be an end of you; but it is not so, for He says, *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways* (Isaiah 55:9).

You rightly judge that He is angry, but He does not keep His anger forever. If you turn from sin and look to Jesus, God will turn from wrath. Because God is God and not man, there is still forgiveness for you, even though you may be filled up to your throat in iniquity. You have a God to deal with and not a cruel man, or even a merely just man. No human being could have patience with you. You would have wearied an angel, just as you have wearied your sorrowing father; but God is patient. Come and prove Him at once. Confess, believe, and turn from your evil way, and you will be saved.

February 17

God Can Make You Strong

*Be strong and do not lose courage, for there is
reward for your work. (2 Chronicles 15:7)*

God had done great things for King Asa and Judah, but yet they were a weak people. Their feet were very unsteady in the ways of the Lord, and their hearts were very hesitant, so they had to be warned that the Lord would be with them while they were with Him, but that if they forsook Him, He would leave them. They were also reminded of the sister kingdom, how poorly Israel made out in its rebellion and how the Lord was gracious to them when repentance was shown. The Lord's plan was to confirm them in His way and make them strong in righteousness. It should be the same way with us. God deserves to be served with all the energy of which we are capable.

If the service of God is worth anything, it is worth everything. We will find our best reward in the Lord's work if we do it with determined diligence. Our labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58), and we know it. Halfhearted work will not bring a reward, but when we throw our whole soul into the cause, we will see prosperity.

Be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work. Someone sent this verse to me during a time of terrible storm, suggesting to me to put on all steam with the assurance of reaching port in safety with a glorious freight.

February 18

God Will Answer

He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. (Psalm 145:19)

*H*is own Spirit has worked this desire in us, and therefore He will answer it. It is His own life within that prompts the cry, and therefore He will hear it. Those who fear Him are people under the holiest influence, and therefore their desire is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Like Daniel, they are people of hope, and the Lord will cause them to realize their desires.

Holy desires are grace in the blade, and the heavenly Husbandman will cultivate them until they come to the full corn in the ear. God-fearing people desire to be holy, to be useful, to be a blessing to others, and to honor their Lord by living this way. They desire supplies for their need, help with their burdens, guidance in perplexity, and deliverance in distress. Sometimes this desire is so strong and their case so urgent that they cry out in agony like little children in pain, and then the Lord works most thoroughly and does all that is needful according to this word: *and will save them.*

Yes, if we fear God, we have nothing else to fear. If we cry to the Lord, our salvation is certain. Let the reader lay this text on his tongue and keep it in his mouth all day long, and it will be to him as a wafer made with honey (Exodus 16:31).

February 19

Better Farther On

*Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict
you no longer. (Nahum 1:12)*

There is a limit to affliction. God sends it, and God removes it. Do you sigh and ask, "When will the end be?" Remember that our griefs will certainly and finally end when this poor earthly life is over. Let us quietly wait and patiently endure the will of the Lord until He comes.

Meanwhile, our Father in heaven takes away the rod when His purpose in using it is fully served. When He has whipped away our foolishness, there will be no more strokes. If the affliction is sent for testing us so that our graces may glorify God, it will end when the Lord has made us bear witness to His praise. We would not want the affliction to depart until God has gotten out of us all the honor that we can possibly give to Him.

Maybe today there will be a great calm (Mark 4:39). Who knows how soon those raging waves will give place to a sea of glass and the sea birds will sit on the gentle waves? After much labor and difficulty, the wheat rests in the storehouse. It might be, before long, that we will be just as happy then as we are sorrowful now. It is not hard for the Lord to turn night into day. He who sends the clouds can just as easily clear the skies. Let us be of good cheer. Things will get better soon enough. Let us sing hallelujah in anticipation.

February 20

Continual Guidance

The Lord will continually guide you. (Isaiah 58:11)

*W*hat troubles you? Have you lost your way? Are you lost in a dense forest and cannot find the path? *Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord* (Exodus 14:13). He knows the way, and He will direct you in it if you cry out to Him.

Every day brings its own difficulties. How sweet to realize that the guidance of the Lord is continual! If we choose our own way or consult with flesh and blood, we cast off the Lord's guidance; but if we abstain from self-will, then He will direct every step of our road, every hour of the day, every day of the year, and every year of our life. If we simply desire to be guided, we will be guided. If we will commit our way unto the Lord, He will direct our ways so that we will not lose ourselves (Psalm 37:5).

Notice to whom this promise is made. Read the previous verse: *If you give yourself to the hungry* (Isaiah 58:10). We must feel compassion for others and give them not just a few dry crusts, but such things as we ourselves would want to receive. If we show a tender care for our fellow creatures in the hour of their need, then the Lord will attend to our necessities and make Himself our continual Guide. Jesus is the Leader, not of those who are stingy or of those who oppress the poor, but of the kind and tenderhearted. Such people are pilgrims who will never lose their way.

February 21

Blessing on Littleness

*He will bless those who fear the Lord, the small
together with the great. (Psalm 115:13)*

*T*his is a word of encouragement to those who are lowly and ordinary and without great wealth and power. Our God has a very gracious consideration for those who are of little wealth, little talent, little influence, and little importance in this world. God cares for the little things in creation, and He even notices sparrows as they land upon the ground. Nothing is small to God, for He makes use of insignificant means to accomplish His purposes. Let the least among us seek from God a blessing upon his littleness, and he will find his limited field to be a happy one.

Among those who fear the Lord, there are little and there are great. Some are infants, and others are giants. But these are all blessed. Little faith is blessed faith. Trembling hope is blessed hope. Every grace of the Holy Spirit, even if it is only in the bud, bears a blessing within it. Moreover, the Lord Jesus bought both the small and the great with the same precious blood, and He has pledged to preserve the lambs as well as the full-grown sheep. No mother overlooks her child because he is little. The smaller he is, the more tenderly she cares for him. If there is any preference with the Lord, He does not arrange them as "great and small," but as "small and great."

February 22

Past Deliverance Begets Faith

David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." (1 Samuel 17:37)

This is not a promise if we consider only the words, but it is truly a promise as to its sense, for David spoke a word that the Lord endorsed by making it true. He argued from past deliverances that he should receive help in a new danger. In Jesus, all the promises are Yes and Amen *to the glory of God by us* (1 Corinthians 1:20), and so the Lord's former dealings with His believing people will be repeated.


Come, then, and let us recall the Lord's former lovingkindness. We could not have hoped to have been delivered in the past by our own strength, yet the Lord delivered us. Will He not save us again? We are sure He will. Just as David ran to meet his enemy, so will we.

The Lord has been with us, He is with us, and He has said that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Why are we afraid? Was the past a dream? Think of the dead bear and lion. Who is this Philistine? True, he is not quite the same, and he is neither a bear nor a lion, but God is the same, and His honor is as much concerned in the one case as in the other. He did not save us from the beasts of the forest to let a giant kill us. Let us be of good courage.

February 23

Unbroken Fellowship Is Essential

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

f necessity, we must be in Christ to live for Him, and we must abide in Him to be able to claim the generosity of this promise from Him. To abide in Jesus is never to leave Him for another love or another object, but to remain in living, loving, conscious, willing union with Him. The branch is not only always near the stem, but it is always receiving life and fruitfulness from it. All true believers abide in Christ in a sense, but there is a higher meaning that we must know before we can gain unlimited power at the throne. *Ask whatever you wish* is for Enochs who walk with God and for Johns who rest on the Lord's chest – for those whose union with Christ leads to constant communion.

The heart must remain in love, the mind must be rooted in faith, the hope must be cemented to the Word, and the whole person must be joined unto the Lord, or else it would be dangerous to trust us with power in prayer. This freedom can only be given to one whose very life is like that of the apostle Paul when he said, *It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me* (Galatians 2:20). O you who break your fellowship, what power you lose! If you want to be mighty in your prayers, the Lord Himself must abide in you, and you in Him.

February 24

Hear So as to Be Heard

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

*N*otice well that we must hear Jesus speak if we expect Him to hear us speak. If we have no ear for Christ, He will have no ear for us. We will be heard in proportion as we hear.

Moreover, what is heard must remain, must live in us, and must abide in our character as a force and a power. We must receive the truths that Jesus taught, the precepts that He issued, and the movements of His Spirit within us – or we will have no power at the mercy seat.

What a limitless field of privilege would open up to us if our Lord's words would be received and abide in us! We are to have our will in prayer because we have already surrendered our will to the Lord's command. This is how Elijahs are trained to handle the keys of heaven and lock or loose the clouds. One such man is worth a thousand common Christians. Do we humbly desire to be intercessors for the church and the world and, like Martin Luther, to be able to have what we desire from the Lord? Then we must bow our ear to the voice of the Well-beloved, treasure up His words, and carefully obey them. He who desires to pray effectually has need to listen diligently.

February 25

Set Apart

You will be called the priests of the Lord. (Isaiah 61:6)

This literal promise to Israel belongs spiritually to those born of the Spirit – namely, to all believers. If we live up to our privileges, we will live unto God so clearly and distinctly that people will see that we are set apart for holy service and will name us the priests of the Lord. We can work or trade as others do, yet we can be entirely and completely the ministering servants of God. Our one occupation will be to present the perpetual sacrifice of prayer, praise, testimony, and self-consecration to the living God through Jesus Christ.

This being our one focus, we can leave distracting concerns to those who have no higher calling. *Allow the dead to bury their own dead* (Matthew 8:22). It is written, *Strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, and foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers* (Isaiah 61:5). Others can manage politics, work out financial problems, discuss science, and settle the latest new theological arguments, but we will give ourselves unto such service as is fitting for those who, like the Lord Jesus, are ordained to a perpetual priesthood.

Accepting this honorable promise as involving a sacred duty, let us put on the garments of holiness and minister before the Lord all day long.

February 26

Truth Established

Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment. (Proverbs 12:19)

Truth wears well. Time tests it, but it endures the trial very well. If, then, I have spoken the truth and have to now suffer for it, I must be content to wait. Also, if I believe the truth of God and attempt to declare it, I may meet with much opposition, but I do not need to fear, for the truth must ultimately prevail.

What a sad thing is the temporary triumph of falsehood! *A lying tongue is only for a moment.* It is a mere plant that comes up in a night and dies in a night (Jonah 4), and the greater its growth, the more obvious is its decay. On the other hand, how worthy of an immortal being is the acknowledgement and defense of that truth that can never change – the everlasting gospel that is established in the unchanging truth of an unchanging God! An old proverb says, “He who speaks truth shames the devil.”² Certainly he who speaks the truth of God will put to shame all the devils in hell and will overcome all the offspring of the serpent who now hiss out their falsehoods.

Take care that you are on the side of truth in all things, in things both small and great, and especially that you are on the side of Him by whom grace and truth have come among men!

2 This saying was quoted in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* (“Tell truth and shame the devil”) in 1597, and was quoted in 1555 by preacher Hugh Latimer: “There is a common saying amongst us, Say the truth and shame the devil.”

February 27

Unwavering Trustfulness

*He will not fear evil tidings; His heart is steadfast,
trusting in the Lord. (Psalm 112:7)*

Suspense is dreadful. When we have no news from home, we tend to grow anxious, and we cannot be convinced that “no news is good news.” Faith is the cure for this condition of sadness. The Lord by His Spirit settles the mind in holy serenity, and all fear is gone regarding the future, as well as the present.

The steadfastness of heart spoken of by the psalmist is to be diligently sought after. It is not believing this or that promise of the Lord, but the general condition of unwavering trustfulness in our God, the confidence that we have in Him that He will not harm Himself nor allow anyone else to harm us. This constant confidence meets the unknown as well as the known of life. Let tomorrow be what it may, our God is the God of tomorrow. No matter what events may have happened, which to us are unknown, our Lord is God of the unknown as well as of the known. We are determined to trust the Lord, come what may. If the very worst should happen, our God is still the greatest and best. Therefore, we will not fear – even if a knock at the door should startle us or a phone call should awaken us at midnight. The Lord lives, and so what can His children fear?

February 28

Real Estate in Heaven

*Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better
and an enduring substance. (Hebrews 10:34 KJV)*


This is good. Our substance here is very unsubstantial; there is no substance in it. However, God has given us a promise of real estate in the land of glory, and that promise comes to our hearts with such full assurance of its certainty that we know in ourselves that we have an enduring substance there. Yes, we possess it even now. They say that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, but we have our bird in the bush and in the hand, too. Even now, heaven is our own. We have the title deed of it, we have the token of it, and we have the firstfruits of it. We have heaven in price, in promise, and in principle. We know this not only by the hearing of the ear, but we know this “in ourselves.”

Should not the thought of the better substance on the other side of Jordan move us to accept present losses? We might lose our spending money, but our treasure is safe. We have lost the shadows, but the substance remains, for our Savior lives, and the place that He has prepared for us abides. There is a better land, a better substance, and a better promise, and all this comes to us by a better covenant. Therefore, let us be in a better frame of mind and say unto the Lord, *Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever* (Psalm 145:2).

February 29

What Follows Us

*Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow
me all the days of my life. (Psalm 23:6)*

 A devout poet sings:

Lord, when thou putttest in my time a day, as thou dost now,
Unknown in other years, grant, I entreat,
Such grace illumine it, that whate'er its phase
It add to holiness, and lengthen praise!³

This day comes only once in four years. Up until now, goodness and lovingkindness, or mercy, like two guards, have followed us from day to day, bringing up the rear even as grace leads the way. Just as this out-of-the-way day is one of the days of our life, the two guardian angels of goodness and mercy will be with us today also. Goodness is with us to supply our needs, and mercy is here to blot out our sins; these two will attend our every step today and every day until days will be no more. Therefore, let us serve the Lord on this special day with special consecration of heart. Let us sing His praises with more zest and sweetness than ever. Could we not make a special offering to the cause of God or to the poor today? By the creativity of love, let us make this twenty-ninth day of February a day to be remembered forever.

3 This poem can be found in *Time's Treasure: Or, Devout Thoughts for Every Day of the Year Expressed in Verse* (published in 1862), by Lord William Penney Kinloch.

March

March 1

Joy for the Outcast

*Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at
His word: "Your brothers who hate you, who
exclude you for My name's sake, have said, 'Let
the Lord be glorified, that we may see your joy.'
But they will be put to shame." (Isaiah 66:5)*

*I*t is possible that this verse might only apply to one in a thousand of the readers of this little book of promises, but the Lord encourages that person with such words as these. Let us pray for all those who are cast out wrongfully from the society that they love. May the Lord appear to their joy!

The text applies to truly gracious people who tremble at the word of the Lord. They were hated by their brethren and were cast out because of their faithfulness and their holiness. This must have been very bitter to them, and all the more so because they were cast out in the name of religion and by those who professed to be glorifying God. How much is done for the devil in the name of God! The use of the name of God to add venom to the bite of the old serpent is an example of his subtlety.

The appearing of the Lord for them is the hope of His persecuted people. He appears as the advocate and defender of His elect, and when He does so, it means a clear deliverance for those who fear God and shame for their oppressors.

*O Lord, fulfill this word to those whom
people are ridiculing and tormenting!*

March 2

Giving without a Whisper

But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:3-4)

A promise is made to those who give to the poor to be seen by others. They have their reward at once and cannot expect to be paid twice.

Let us hide our acts of charity – yes, hide it even from ourselves. Give so often and so much as a matter of habit that you no more notice that you have helped the poor than that you have eaten your regular meals. Give to others without even whispering to yourself, *How generous I am!* Do not try to reward yourself in this way. Leave the matter with God, who never fails to see, to record, and to reward. Blessed is the man who is busy in secret with his kindness. He finds a special joy in his unknown benevolences. This is the bread that, when eaten in secret, is sweeter than the banquets of kings. How can I indulge myself today with this delightful luxury? Let me have a real feast of tenderness and outpouring of soul.

In this life and the next, the Lord Himself will personally see to the rewarding of those who give to others in secret. This will be in His own way and time, and He will choose the very best. It will take all of eternity to reveal how much this promise means.

March 3

Not Left to Perish

For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. (Psalm 16:10)

*T*his verse has its proper fulfillment in the Lord Jesus, but in a slightly different way it also applies to all who are in Him. Our soul will not be left in the separate state, and our body, even though it will see corruption, will rise again. I want to call your attention now to the general meaning rather than the specific application.

We may descend very low in spirit until we seem to be plunged in the depths of Sheol, but we will not be left there. We might seem to be at death's door in heart, soul, and consciousness, but we cannot remain there. Our inward death as to joy and hope might proceed very far, but it cannot run on to its full consequences so as to reach the utter corruption of dark despair. We might go very low, but we will not go lower than the Lord allows. We might stay in the lowest dungeon of doubt for a while, but we will not perish there. The star of hope is still in the sky when the night is darkest. The Lord will not forget us and hand us over to the enemy. Let us rest in hope. We are dealing with One whose mercy endures forever (Psalm 136). Surely out of death, darkness, and despair we will arise to life, light, and liberty.

March 4

Honor God

Those who honor Me I will honor. (1 Samuel 2:30)

Do I make the honor of God the great object of my life and the rule of my conduct? If so, He will honor me. I may for a while receive no honor from man, but God Himself will put honor upon me in the most effective way. In the end, you will find that the most certain way to be honored by God is to be willing to be put to shame for conscience' sake.

Eli had not honored the Lord by ruling his household well, and his sons had not honored the Lord by behavior worthy of their sacred office, and therefore the Lord did not honor them. Instead, he took the high priesthood out of their family and made young Samuel to be ruler in the land instead of any of their line (1 Samuel 2:12-36). If I want my family to be honored, I must honor the Lord in all things. God may allow the wicked to win worldly honors, but the dignity that He Himself gives – glory, honor, and immortality – He reserves for those who by holy obedience take care to honor Him.

What can I do today to honor the Lord? I will promote His glory by my spoken testimony and by my practical obedience. I will also honor Him with my possessions and by offering to Him some special service. Let me sit down and consider how I can honor Him since He will honor me.

March 5

Home Blessings

He blesses the dwelling of the righteous. (Proverbs 3:33)

*H*e who is righteous fears the Lord, and therefore he comes under divine protection, even as to the roof that covers him and his family. His home is an abode of love, a school of holy training, and a place of heavenly light. There is a family altar in the home where the name of the Lord is revered daily. Therefore, the Lord blesses his habitation. It may be a humble cottage or a lordly mansion, but the Lord's blessing comes because of the character of the inhabitant and not because of the size of the dwelling.

That house is most blessed in which the husband and wife are God-fearing people, but a son or daughter can also bring a blessing on a whole household. The Lord often preserves, prospers, and provides for a family for the sake of one or two people in it who are just and righteous in His sight, because His grace has made them so. Beloved, let us have Jesus for our constant guest, even as the sisters of Bethany had, and then we will be blessed indeed.

Let us see to it that we are just in all things – in our jobs, in our judgment of others, in our treatment of neighbors, and in our own personal character. A just God cannot bless unjust words, thoughts, and actions.

March 6

Guardian of the Fatherless

In You the orphan finds mercy. (Hosea 14:3)

*T*his is an excellent reason for getting rid of anything and everything else that you trust in and depend upon and begin to rely upon the Lord alone. When a child is left without its natural protector, our God steps in and becomes his guardian; so, too, when a person has lost every object of dependence, he can cast himself upon the living God and find in Him all that he needs. Orphans are cast upon the fatherhood of God, and He provides for them. I have learned what it is to hang on the bare arm of God, and I am a willing witness that no trust is so well warranted by facts, or so sure to be rewarded by results, as trust in the invisible but ever-living God.

Some children who have fathers are not much better off because of them, but the fatherless with God are rich. It is better to have God and no other friend than to have all the supporters on the earth and no God. To be bereaved of someone is painful, but as long as the Lord remains the fountain of mercy to us, we are not truly orphaned. Let fatherless children plead the gracious word for this morning, and let all who have been bereaved of visible support do the same.

*Lord, let me find mercy in You! The more needy and helpless
I am, the more confidently I appeal to Your loving heart.*

March 7

Set Free from Chains

The Lord sets the prisoners free. (Psalm 146:7)

He has done it. Remember Joseph, Israel in Egypt, Manasseh, Jeremiah, Peter, and many others. He has done it before, and He can do it still. He breaks the bars of brass with a word, and He snaps the chains of iron with a look. He is doing it. In a thousand places, troubled ones are coming forth to light and growth. Jesus still proclaims the opening of the prison to those who are bound. At this moment, doors are flying back and chains are falling to the ground.

He will delight to set you free, dear friend, if you are now mourning because of sorrow, doubt, and fear. It will be joy to Jesus to give you liberty. It will give Him as much pleasure to loose you as it will be a pleasure to you to be loosed. You do not have to snap the iron band, for the Lord Himself will do it. Simply trust Him, and He will be your Emancipator. Believe in Him despite the stone walls and the iron chains. Satan cannot hold you, sin cannot bind you, and even despair cannot imprison you if you will now believe in the Lord Jesus – in the freeness of His grace and in the fullness of His power to save.

Defy the enemy, and let the word now before you be your song of deliverance: *The Lord sets the prisoners free.*

March 8

Our Substance Blessed

*Blessed will be your basket and your
kneading bowl. (Deuteronomy 28:5)*

*O*bedience brings a blessing on all the provisions that our hard work earns for us. That which comes in and goes out at once, like fruit in the basket that is for immediate use, will be blessed. That which is stored up by us for a longer season will equally receive a blessing. Maybe we have a handbasket portion. We have a little for breakfast and a little bite for lunch in a basket when we go out to do our work in the morning. This is good, for the blessing of God is promised to the basket. If we live from hand to mouth, getting each day's supply each day, we are as well off as Israel, for when the Lord provided for His favored people, He only gave them one day's manna at a time. What more did they need? What more do we need?

But if we have a supply stored up, how much we need the Lord to bless it, for there is the care of getting, the care of keeping, the care of managing, and the care of using. Unless the Lord blesses it, these cares will eat into our hearts until our goods become our gods and our cares become corruptions.

*O Lord, bless our substance. Enable us to use it for Your
glory. Help us to keep worldly things in their proper places,
and may our savings never endanger the saving of our souls.*

March 9

Prayer for Peace

Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare. (Jeremiah 29:7)

*T*he principle involved in this text would suggest to all of us who are the Lord's strangers and foreigners (Hebrews 11:13) that we should desire to promote the peace and prosperity of the people among whom we dwell. Our nation and our city should especially be blessed by our constant intercession. An earnest prayer for your country and other countries is very suitable in the mouth of every believer. Let us eagerly pray for the great blessing of peace, both at home and abroad. If strife should cause bloodshed in our streets, or if foreign battle should slay our brave soldiers, we would all lament the calamity. Therefore, let us pray for peace and diligently promote those principles by which the people both at home and abroad can be bound together in bonds of friendship.

March 10

Walk in Light

I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. (John 12:46)

*T*his world is as dark as midnight. Jesus has come so that by faith we can have light and will no longer sit in the darkness that covers all the rest of mankind.

Everyone is a very wide term: it means you and me. If we trust in Jesus, we will no longer sit in the dark shadow of death, but will enter into the warm light of a day that will never end. Why do we not come out into the light at once?

A cloud may sometimes hang over us, but we will not abide in darkness if we believe in Jesus. He has come to give us broad daylight. Will He come in vain? If we have faith, we have the privilege of sunlight; let us enjoy it. From the night of natural depravity, ignorance, doubt, despair, sin, and dread, Jesus has come to set us free. All believers will know that He does not come in vain any more than the sun rises without scattering its heat and light.

Shake off your depression, dear brother. Do not abide in the dark, but abide in the light. In Jesus is your hope, your joy, and your heaven. Look to Him, to Him only, and you will rejoice as the birds rejoice at sunrise and as the angels rejoice before the throne.

March 11

Whose Battle?

All this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands. (1 Samuel 17:47)

*I*f we know that the battle is the Lord's, we can be quite certain of the victory, and we can know that the victory will be won in such a way that will best display the power of God. The Lord is too much forgotten by all people, and even by the assemblies of Israel. When there is an opportunity to make people see that the great First Cause can achieve His purposes without the power of man, it is a priceless occasion that should be well utilized. Even Israel looks too much to the sword and spear. It is a great thing for David not to have a sword in his hand, and yet for David to know that his God will overthrow an entire foreign army.

If we are indeed contending for truth and righteousness, let us not wait until we have ability, wealth, or any other form of visible power at our disposal, but with the stones that we find in the brook, and with our own usual sling, let us run to meet the enemy. We might not be confident if we had to fight the battle in our own strength, but if we are standing up for Jesus and warring in His strength alone, who can withstand us? Without any hesitancy, let us face the Philistines, for the Lord of Hosts is with us, and who can be against us?

March 12

Going Out with Joy

Of Zebulun he said, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going forth." (Deuteronomy 33:18)

The blessings of the tribes are ours, for we are the true Israel who worship God in the spirit and have no confidence in the flesh. Zebulun is to rejoice because God will bless his *going forth*, and we also see a promise for ourselves lying dormant in this benediction. When we go out, we will look for occasions of joy.

We go out to travel, and the providence of God is our convoy. We go out to emigrate, and the Lord is with us both on land and sea. We go out as missionaries, and Jesus says, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age* (Matthew 28:20). We go out day by day to labor, and we can do so with pleasure, for God will be with us from morning until evening.

A fear sometimes creeps over us when we start out, for we do not know what we may meet with, but this blessing may serve us very well as a word of good cheer. As we pack up to move, let us put this verse into our suitcase. Let us drop it into our hearts and keep it there. Yes, let us lay it on our tongue to make us sing. Let us weigh anchor with a song, or jump into the carriage with a psalm. Let us belong to the rejoicing tribe, and in our every movement, let us praise the Lord with joyful hearts.

March 13

Do Not Despise Your Youth

Then I said, "Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' because everywhere I send you, you will go, and all that I command you, you will speak." (Jeremiah 1:6-7)

Jeremiah was young and felt a natural reluctance when sent upon a great errand by the Lord; but He who sent him would not have him say, *I am a youth*. What he was in himself must not be mentioned, but was to be lost in the consideration that he was chosen to speak for God. He did not have to come up with or invent a message, nor did he need to choose an audience. He was to speak what God commanded and speak where God sent him, and he would be enabled to do this in strength that was not his own.

Is it not the same with some young preacher or teacher who may read these lines? God knows how young you are and how limited your knowledge and experience are, but if He chooses to send you, it is not for you to retreat from the heavenly call. God will magnify Himself in our weakness. If you were as old as Methuselah, how much would your years help you? If you were as wise as Solomon, you might be as equally self-willed as he. Keep to your message, and it will be your wisdom. Follow your marching orders, and they will be your discretion.

March 14

Tender Comfort

*As one whom his mother comforts, so I
will comfort you. (Isaiah 66:13)*

A mother's comfort is tenderness itself. How she enters into her child's grief! How she holds him to her chest and tries to take all his sorrow into her own heart! He can tell her all, and she will sympathize as nobody else can. Of all comforters, the child loves his mother best, and even full-grown men have found it so.

Does the Lord condescend to act the mother's part? This is goodness indeed. We easily perceive how He is a father; but will He be as a mother also? Does not this invite us to holy familiarity, to unreserved confidence, and to sacred rest? When God Himself becomes the Comforter, no anguish can abide long. Let us tell Him our troubles, even though sobs and sighs might be our most immediate expressions. He will not despise us for our tears; our mother did not. He will consider our weakness as she did, and He will put away our faults, only in a surer, safer way than our mother could do. We will not try to bear our grief alone, for that would be unkind to one so gentle and so kind. Let us begin the day with our loving God, and let us finish it in the same way, since mothers do not grow weary of their children.

March 15

God Is a Sanctuary

Therefore say, "Thus says the Lord God, 'Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone.'" (Ezekiel 11:16)

Even if banished from the public means of grace, we are not removed from the grace of the means. The Lord who places His people where they feel as exiles will Himself be with them and will be to them all that they could have had at home in the place of their solemn assemblies. Take this for yourselves, O you who are called to wander!

God is a place of refuge to His people. They find sanctuary with Him from every adversary, for He is their place of worship, too. He is with them just as He was with Jacob when he slept in the open field, and rising, said, *Surely the Lord is in this place* (Genesis 28:16). He will also be a sanctuary of quiet to them, like the Holy of Holies, which was the noiseless abode of the Eternal. They will be quiet from fear of evil.

God Himself, in Christ Jesus, is the sanctuary of mercy. The ark of the covenant is the Lord Jesus, and Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, and the tables of the law are all, in Christ, our sanctuary (Hebrews 9:4). In God we find the sanctuary of holiness and of communion. What more do we need?

*O Lord, fulfill this promise and always
be to us as a little sanctuary!*

March 16

An Example to Others

*The things you have learned and received and heard
and seen in me, practice these things, and the God
of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)*

*I*t is good when a man can beneficially be so closely imitated as Paul could have been. Oh, for grace to imitate him today and every day!

If we would, through divine grace, carry into practice the teaching of Paul, we can claim the promise that is now before us – and what a promise it is! God, who loves peace, makes peace, and breathes peace, will be with us. “Peace be with you” is a sweet benediction, but for the God of peace to be with us is far more. In this we have the fountain as well as the streams, and the sun as well as its beams. If the God of peace is with us, we will enjoy the peace of God that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7), even though outward circumstances might threaten to unsettle us. If people quarrel, we will be sure to be peacemakers if the Maker of peace is with us.

It is in the way of truth that real peace is found. If we leave the faith or leave the path of righteousness under the notion of promoting peace, we will be greatly mistaken. *First pure, then peaceable*, is the order of wisdom and of fact (James 3:17). Let us keep to Paul’s order of things, and we will have the God of peace with us just as He was with the apostle.

March 17

Fear to Fear

"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 1:8)

Whenever fear comes in and makes us stumble, we are in danger of falling into sin. Conceit is to be dreaded, but so is cowardice. Dare to be a Daniel.⁴ Our great Captain should be served by brave soldiers.

What a reason for bravery this is! God is with those who are with Him. God will never be away when the hour of struggle comes. Do they threaten you? Who are you that you should be afraid of a man who will die? Will you lose your job? Your God whom you serve will find bread and water for His servants. Can you not trust Him? Do they ridicule you? Will this break your bones or your heart? Bear it for Christ's sake, and even rejoice because of it.

God is with those who are true, just, and holy to deliver them, and He will deliver you. Remember how Daniel came out of the lions' den and the three holy children came out of the furnace. Your situation is not as desperate as theirs, but if it were, the Lord would carry you through and make you more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37). Fear to fear. Be afraid to be afraid. Your worst enemy is within your own heart. Get to your knees and cry for help, and then rise up saying, *I will trust and not be afraid* (Isaiah 12:2).

⁴ "Dare to be a Daniel" is the title of a hymn by Philip P. Bliss.

March 18

Continue Upright

The prayer of the upright is His delight. (Proverbs 15:8)

This is as good as a promise, for it declares a present fact that will be the same throughout all ages. God takes great pleasure in the prayers of upright people. He even calls them His delight. Our first concern is to be upright. Continue upright, bending neither this way nor that. Do not be crooked in your actions, nor bent over by yielding to evil, but be upright in strict integrity and truthfulness. If we begin to shuffle and shift, we will be left to shift for ourselves. If we try crooked ways, we will find that we cannot pray, and if we pretend to do so, we will find that our prayers are shut out of heaven.

Are we acting in a straight line and thus following the Lord's revealed will? Then let us pray much and pray in faith. If our prayer is God's delight, let us not limit Him in that which gives Him pleasure. He does not consider the grammar of it, the metaphysics of it, or the rhetoric of it. People might despise your words because of these things, but God, as a Father, takes pleasure in the voice of His own children and in the stammerings of His newborn sons and daughters. Should we not delight in prayer since the Lord delights in it? Let us often make trips to the throne. The Lord finds us enough reasons for prayer, and we should thank Him that it is so.

March 19

Becoming Fit for Glory

The Lord gives grace and glory. (Psalm 84:11)

Grace is what we need right now, and it is to be obtained freely. What can be freer than a gift? Today we will receive sustaining, strengthening, sanctifying, and satisfying grace. God has given daily grace until now, and as for the future, that grace is still sufficient. If we only have a little grace, the fault must lie in ourselves, for the Lord is not impoverished, nor is He slow to bestow it in abundance. We can ask for as much as we desire, and we never need to fear a refusal. He giveth *generously and without reproach* (James 1:5).

The Lord may not give gold, but He will give grace. He may not give gain, but He will give grace. He will certainly send us trials, but He will give grace in proportion to those trials. We might be called to labor and to suffer, but with the call will come all the grace required.

What an ending that is in our verse: *and glory*. We do not need glory yet, and we are not yet ready for it, but we will have it in due time. After we have eaten the bread of grace, we will drink the wine of glory. We must go through the holy, which is grace, to the holiest of all, which is glory. These words and glory are enough to make a person dance for joy. A little while – a little while – and then glory forever!

March 20

Divine Provision

If God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! (Matthew 6:30)

Clothes are expensive, and poor believers may be led to worry as to where their next suit of clothing will come from. The soles of our shoes are thin; how will we get new shoes? See how our thoughtful Lord has provided for this care. Our heavenly Father clothes the grass of the field with a splendor such as Solomon could not equal; will He not clothe His own children? We are certain that He will. There may be many patches and mends, but we will have clothing.

A poor minister found his clothes nearly worn out and so far gone that they would barely hold together, but as a servant of the Lord, he expected his Master to find him his clothing. It so happened that I was visiting a friend and was to preach in the good man's pulpit. It entered my mind to take a collection for him, and in this way his clothing was provided. We have seen many other cases in which those who had served the Lord have found Him mindful of their wardrobe. He who made man so that he needed clothing after he had sinned, also in mercy supplied him with them; and those garments that the Lord gave to our first parents were far better than those they made for themselves (Genesis 3).

March 21

Avoid That Slip

*Then you will walk in your way securely and
your foot will not stumble. (Proverbs 3:23)*

*I*f we follow the ways of wisdom and holiness, we will be preserved in them. He who travels by daylight along the highway is under some protection. There is a way for everyone – namely, his own proper calling in life – and if we devoutly walk therein in the fear of God, He will preserve us from evil. We may not travel luxuriously, but we will walk safely. We may not be able to run like young men, but we will be able to walk like good men.

Our greatest danger lies in ourselves. Our feeble foot is so sadly inclined to stumble. Let us ask for more moral strength that our tendency to stumble will be overcome. Some stumble because they do not see the stone in the way; divine grace enables us to be aware of sin and so to avoid it. Let us plead this promise and trust in Him who upholds His chosen ones.

Sadly, our worst pitfall is our own carelessness, but the Lord Jesus has put us on our guard against this, telling us to watch and pray (Matthew 26:41).

Oh, for grace to walk this day without a single stumble! It is not enough that we do not actually fall, but our cry should be that we will not make the smallest slip with our feet, but may in the end adore Him who is able to keep us from stumbling (Jude 1:24).

March 22

Grace for the Humble

*God is opposed to the proud, but gives
grace to the humble. (James 4:6)*

*H*umble hearts seek grace, and therefore they get it. Humble hearts yield to the sweet influences of grace, and so it is given to them more and more generously. Humble hearts lie in the valleys where streams of grace are flowing, and therefore they drink of them. Humble hearts are grateful for grace, and they give the Lord the glory for it, and so it is consistent with His honor to give it to them.

Come, dear reader, take a humble place. Be little in your own esteem so that the Lord can make much of you. Perhaps the groan breaks out, "I am afraid that I am not humble." It might be that this is the language of true humility. Some are proud of being humble, and this is one of the very worst kinds of pride. We are needy, helpless, undeserving, hell-deserving creatures, and if we are not humble, we should be. Let us humble ourselves because of our sins against humility, and then the Lord will allow us to taste of His favor. It is grace that makes us humble, and it is grace that finds in this humility an opportunity for pouring in more grace. Let us humble ourselves so that we can rise. Let us be poor in spirit so that God can make us rich. Let us be humble so that we will not need to be humbled, but can be exalted by the grace of God.

March 23

A Sure Guide

*I will lead the blind by a way they do
not know. (Isaiah 42:16)*

*T*hink of the infinitely glorious God acting as a guide to the blind! What limitless condescension does this suggest! A blind man cannot find a way that he does not know. Even when he knows the road, it is hard for him to travel it, but a road that he has not known is quite out of the question for his unguided feet. We are by nature blind as to the way of salvation, and yet the Lord leads us into it, brings us to Himself, and then opens our eyes. As to the future, we are all blind and cannot see an hour ahead of us, but the Lord Jesus will lead us all the way to our journey's end. Blessed be His name!

We cannot guess in what way deliverance can possibly come to us, but the Lord knows, and He will lead us until we have escaped every danger. Happy are those who place their hand in the hand of the great Guide, and who leave their way and themselves entirely with Him. He will bring them all the way, and when He has brought them home to glory and has opened their eyes to see the way by which He has led them, what a song of gratitude they will sing unto their great Benefactor!

*Lord, lead Your poor blind child this
day, for I do not know my way!*

March 24

Strengthened and Protected

But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)

People are often as empty of reason as they are of faith. *Perverse and evil men* are still with us (2 Thessalonians 3:2). There is no use in arguing with them or trying to be at peace with them, for they are false at heart and deceitful in speech. Well, what of this? Will we worry ourselves with them? No; let us turn to the Lord, for He is faithful. No promise from His Word will ever be broken. He is neither unreasonable in His demands upon us nor unfaithful to our claims upon Him. We have a faithful God. Let this be our joy.

He will strengthen us so that wicked people will not cause our downfall, and He will protect us so that none of the evils that now assail us will really do us damage. What a blessing for us that we do not need to contend with men, but are allowed to shelter ourselves in the Lord Jesus, who is in truest sympathy with us. There is one true heart, one faithful mind, and one never-changing love in Him. Let us find our rest there. The Lord will fulfill the purpose of His grace to us, His servants, and we do not need to allow the shadow of fear to fall upon our spirits. Not all that people or devils can do can hinder us from the divine protection and provision. Let us pray to the Lord today to strengthen and protect us.

March 25

Refreshing Sleep

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. (Proverbs 3:24)

Are you likely to be confined for a while to your bed by sickness? You can go upstairs without distress with this promise upon your heart: *When you lie down, you will not be afraid.*

When we go to bed at night, let this word give us rest. We cannot guard ourselves in sleep, but the Lord will keep us through the night. Those who lie down under the protection of the Lord are as secure as kings and queens in their palaces, and a great deal more so. If, when we lie down, we also lay down all our cares and plans, we will get refreshment out of our beds such as the anxious and covetous never find in theirs. Bad dreams will be banished, or even if they come, we will wipe out the thought of them, knowing that they are only dreams.

If we sleep in this way, we will do well. How sweetly Peter slept when even the angel's light did not wake him, and he needed a hard slap in the side to wake him up (Acts 12:7), even though he was sentenced to die the next day. Other martyrs have slept similarly before their burning. *He gives to His beloved even in his sleep* (Psalms 127:2). To have sweet sleep, we must have sweet lives, sweet tempers, sweet meditations, and sweet love.

March 26

The Care of the Poor

The Lord will sustain him upon his sickbed. (Psalm 41:3)

*R*emember that this is a promise to the person who considers the poor. If you are one who considers and cares about the poor, then apply this verse to yourself.

See how in the hour of sickness the God of the poor will bless the person who cares for the poor! The everlasting arms will support his soul just as friendly hands and soft pillows support the body of the sick. How tender and compassionate is this image! How near it brings our God to our infirmities and sicknesses! Whoever heard this about the old heathen Jove, or of the gods of India or China? This is language particular to the God of Israel. It is He who condescends to become nurse and attendant upon good people. If He smites with one hand, He sustains with the other.

Oh, even getting sick can be a blessing when one falls upon the Lord's own arms and is supported by them. Grace is the best method of being restored. Divine love is the safest tonic for the weak patient. It makes the soul as strong as a giant, even when the bones are breaking through the skin. There is no physician like the Lord, no tonic like His promise, and no medicine like His love.

If you have failed in your duty to the poor, see what you are losing, and at once become their friend and helper.

March 27

Drawing Near to God

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. (James 4:8)

The nearer we go to God, the more graciously He will reveal Himself to us. When the prodigal comes to his father, his father runs to meet him. When the wandering dove returns to the ark, Noah puts out his hand to pull her in to him. When the tender wife seeks her husband's society, he comes to her on wings of love. Come then, dear friend, and let us draw near to God who so graciously awaits us and who comes to meet us.

Did you ever notice that passage in Isaiah 58:9? The Lord seems to put Himself at the disposal of His people, saying to them, *Here I am*. It is as if He is saying, "What do you have to say to Me? What can I do for you? I am waiting to bless you." How can we hesitate to draw near? God is near to forgive, to bless, to comfort, to help, to awaken, and to deliver. Let it be the main objective with us to get near to God. When this is done, all is done. If we draw near to others, they may soon grow weary of us and leave us, but if we seek the Lord alone, He will not change His mind, but He will continue to come nearer and still nearer to us by fuller and more joyful fellowship.

March 28

Lead the Way

*The Lord will make you the head and not
the tail. (Deuteronomy 28:13)*

*I*f we obey the Lord, He will compel our adversaries to see that His blessing rests upon us. Even though this is a promise of the law, it remains good for the people of God, for Jesus has removed the curse, but He has established the blessing.

Christians are to lead the way among people by holy influence. They are not to be the tail and to be dragged here and there by others. We must not yield to the spirit of the age, but must compel the age to honor Christ. If the Lord is with us, we will simply desire toleration for the Christian religion, but we will seek to place it upon the throne of society. Has not the Lord Jesus made His people priests (Revelation 1:6)? Surely they are to teach and should not be learning from the ideas and principles of unbelievers. Are we not in Christ made kings to reign upon the earth (Revelation 5:10)? How, then, can we be the servants of tradition or the slaves of human opinion?

Have you, dear friend, taken up your true position for Jesus? Too many are silent because they are ashamed and timid, if not cowardly. Should we allow the name of the Lord Jesus to be kept in the background? Should the religion of Jesus Christ drag along as a tail? Should it not instead lead the way and be the ruling force with ourselves and others?

March 29

Fearless Faith

*I am with you, and no man will attack you
in order to harm you. (Acts 18:10)*

As long as the Lord had work for Paul to do in Corinth, the fury of the mob was restrained. The Jews opposed them and blasphemed, but they could not stop the preaching of the gospel nor the conversion of the hearers. God has power over the most violent minds. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him when it breaks forth, but He still more displays His goodness when He restrains it – and He can restrain it. *By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone; until Your people pass over, O Lord (Exodus 15:16).*

Therefore, you do not need to have any fear of man when you know that you are doing your duty. Go straight ahead, as Jesus would have done, and those who oppose you will be as harmless as barking dogs. Many times people have had reason to fear because they were themselves afraid, but a fearless faith in God brushes fear aside like the cobwebs in a giant's path. No one can harm us unless the Lord allows it. He who makes the devil himself to flee at a word can certainly control the devil's agents. Maybe they are already more afraid of you than you are of them. Therefore, go forward, and where you thought that you would meet with foes, you will find friends.

March 30

Prayer, Thanksgiving, and Praise

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

No care, but all prayer. No anxiety, but much joyful communion with God. Carry your desires to the Lord of your life, the guardian of your soul. Go to Him with two portions of prayer and one of fragrant praise. Do not pray doubtfully, but thankfully. Consider that you have your petitions, and therefore thank God for His grace. He is giving you grace; give Him thanks. Hide nothing. Do not let any need lie festering inside you. *Let your requests be made known to God.* Do not run to man. Go only to your God, the Father of Jesus, who loves you in Him.

This will bring you God's own peace. You will not be able to understand the peace that you will enjoy. It will surround you in its infinite embrace. Hearts and minds through Christ Jesus will be immersed in a sea of rest. Come life or death, poverty, pain, or slander, you will dwell in Jesus above every rolling wind or darkening cloud. Will you not obey this dear command?

*Yes, Lord, I do believe You, but I plead
with You to help my unbelief.*

March 31

Presence of Mind

*Do not be afraid of sudden fear nor of the
onslaught of the wicked when it comes; for the
Lord will be your confidence and will keep your
foot from being caught. (Proverbs 3:25-26)*

*W*hen God is bringing judgment, He does not want His people to be alarmed. He has not come forth to harm, but to defend the righteous.

He wants His people to show courage. We who enjoy the presence of God should display presence of mind. Since the Lord Himself may suddenly come, we should not be surprised at anything sudden. Peace under the rush and roar of unexpected evils is a precious gift of divine love.

The Lord wants His chosen ones to display discernment so that they can see that the desolation of the wicked is not a real calamity to the universe. Sin alone is evil; the punishment that follows the evil acts as a preserving salt to keep society from rotting. We should be far more shocked at the sin that deserves hell than at the hell that comes out of sin.

The Lord's people should also show great calmness of spirit. Satan and his serpent seed are full of all deviousness, but those who walk with God will not be taken in their deceitful snares. Go on, believer in Jesus, and let the Lord be your confidence.

April

April 1

The King's Highway

A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it. (Isaiah 35:8)

*T*he way of holiness is so straight and plain that the simplest minds cannot go astray if they constantly follow it. The worldly-wise have many twists and turns, and they make terrible mistakes and generally do not reach their goals. Worldly policy is a poor, shortsighted thing, and when people choose it as their road, it leads them over dark mountains. Gracious minds simply do as the Lord asks them, and this keeps them in the King's highway and under royal protection.

Never for a moment try to help yourself out of a difficulty by a lie or by a questionable act. Instead, keep in the middle of the high road of truth and integrity, and you will be following the best possible course. In our lives we must never practice deceit or duplicity. Be just and do not fear. Follow Jesus and do not be concerned about the consequences. If the worst difficulties could be avoided by doing wrong, we would fall into an evil worse than any other by doing that which was wrong. God's way is the very best way. Follow it thoroughly, even if many people might think that you are being foolish – and you will be truly wise.

*Lord, lead Your servants in a plain
path because of their enemies.*

April 2

True Heart Energy

Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. (1 Timothy 4:15)

This is, practically, a promise that by diligent meditation and giving up our whole mind to our work for the Lord, we will make progress in our Christian walk that all can see. We do not grow strong by simply quickly reading a little portion of the Bible, but by deep meditation on and in the Word of God. The real benefit does not come by doing a lot of work in a lackadaisical manner, but by giving our best thought to what we attempt. In all labor there is profit (Proverbs 14:23), but not in busyness and hurry without true heart energy.

If we divide ourselves between God and the world, or between Christ and self, we will not make any progress. We must give ourselves wholly to holy things, or else we will be poor traders in heavenly business, and we will not make profit or progress.

Am I a minister? Let me be a minister wholeheartedly and not spend my time and energy upon secondary concerns. Why would I waste time and energy on party politics or empty amusements? Am I a Christian? Let me make my service to Jesus my occupation, my lifework, and my one pursuit. We must be all in with Jesus, and then go all out for Jesus, or else we will not make progress or profit, and neither the church nor the world will feel the forceful influence that the Lord wants us to exercise.

April 3

Sensitive to Warning

"Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the Lord when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I truly have heard you," declares the Lord. (2 Kings 22:19)

*M*any despise being warned, and they perish. Happy is he who trembles at the word of God. Josiah did so, and he was spared the sight of the evil that the Lord determined to send upon Judah because of her great sins. Do you have this tenderness? Do you practice this self-humiliation? If so, you also will be spared in the evil day. God sets a mark upon the people who mourn and cry because of the sin of the times (Ezekiel 9:4). The destroying angel is commanded to keep his sword in its sheath until the elect of God are sheltered. These people are best known by their godly fear and their trembling at the word of the Lord.

Are the times threatening? Does unbelief advance with great strides, and do you dread national chastisement upon this sinful nation? You can rightly do so. Yet rest in this promise: *I will gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes will not see all the evil which I will bring on this place* (2 Kings 22:20). Better still, the Lord Himself may come, and then the days of our mourning will be over.

April 4

God's Hornets

*I will send hornets ahead of you so that they
will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and
the Hittites before you. (Exodus 23:28)*

We do not now need to consider what the hornets were. They were God's own army that He sent before His people to sting their enemies and make Israel's conquest easier. Our God by His own chosen means will fight for His people and trouble their enemies before they come into the actual battle. He often confounds the adversaries of truth by methods in which reformers themselves have no hand. The air is full of mysterious influences that harass Israel's foes. We read in the book of Revelation that the earth helped the woman (Revelation 12:16).

Let us never fear. The stars in their courses fight against the enemies of our souls. Often when we march to the conflict, we find no army to contend with. *The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent* (Exodus 14:14). God's hornets can do more than our weapons. We could never dream of the victory being won by such means as God will use. We must obey our marching orders and go forth to the conquest of the nations for Jesus. If we do, we will find that the Lord has gone before us and prepared the way, and in the end we will joyfully confess, *His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him* (Psalm 98:1).

April 5

Not Forgotten

*You are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant,
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me. (Isaiah 44:21)*

Our God cannot forget His servants so as to stop loving them. He did not just choose them for a little while, but forever. He knew what they would be when He called them into the divine family. He blots out their sins like a cloud (Isaiah 44:22), and we can be sure that He will not turn them away for iniquities that He has blotted out. It would be blasphemy to imagine such a thing.

He will not forget them so as to stop thinking about them. One forgetful moment on the part of our God would be our ruin. Therefore He says, *You will not be forgotten by Me*. People might forget us. Those whom we have helped might turn against us. We have no abiding place in the fickle hearts of men, but God will never forget one of His true servants. He binds Himself to us, not by what we do for Him, but by what He has done for us. We have been loved too long and bought at too great a price to be now forgotten. Jesus sees in us His soul's travail (Isaiah 53:11), and He can never forget that. The Father sees in us the spouse of His Son, and the Spirit sees in us His own powerful work. The Lord thinks about us. Today we will be helped and sustained. Oh, that the Lord may never be forgotten by us!

April 6

One King, One Lord

The Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one. (Zechariah 14:9)

*W*hat a happy thought! This is not the dream of an enthusiast, but the declaration of the infallible Word. The Lord God will be known among all people, and His gracious rule will be acknowledged by every tribe of man. Today, it is far from being so. Where do any bow before the great King? How much rebellion there is! There are many lords and gods on the earth! Even among professed Christians there is a great diversity of ideas about Him and His gospel! One day there will be one King over all the earth.

O Lord, hasten it! We daily cry, "Your kingdom come."

We will not discuss the question as to when this will be so that we do not lose the comfort of the certainty that it will indeed be. As certainly as the Holy Spirit spoke by His prophets, so surely will the whole earth be filled with the glory of the Lord (Habakkuk 2:14). Jesus did not die in vain. The Spirit of God does not work in vain. The Father's eternal purposes will not be frustrated. Here, where Satan triumphed, Jesus will be crowned, and the Lord God Omnipotent will reign (Revelation 19:6). Let us go our way to our daily work and warfare made strong in faith.

April 7

Without Fear of Man

*All the peoples of the earth will see that you are
called by the name of the Lord, and they will
be afraid of you. (Deuteronomy 28:10)*

We can then have no reason to be afraid of others. This would show a poor spirit and would be a sign of unbelief rather than of faith. God can make us so much like Himself that people will be forced to see that we rightly bear His name and truly belong to the holy God. Oh, that we may obtain this grace that the Lord waits to bestow!

Be assured that ungodly people have a fear of true saints. They hate them, but they also fear them. Haman trembled because of Mordecai, even when he sought the good man's destruction. In fact, their hate often arises out of a fear that they are too proud to confess. Let us pursue the path of truth and uprightness without the slightest tremor. Fear is not for us, but for those who do wrong and who fight against the Lord of Hosts. If indeed we are called by the name of the eternal God, we are secure; for, as of old, a Roman had but to say *Romanus sum*, I am a Roman, and he could claim the protection of all the legions of the vast empire. Everyone who is a man or woman of God has Omnipotence as his guardian, and God will sooner empty heaven of angels than leave a saint without defense. Be braver than lions in promoting what is right according to the Word of God, for God is with you.

April 8

Preserved to Work's End

The Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also." (Acts 23:11)

*A*re you a witness for the Lord, and are you now in danger? Then remember that you are immortal until your work is done. If the Lord has more witness for you to bear, you will live to bear it. Who is he who can break the vessel that the Lord intends to use again?

If there is no more work for you to do for your Master, it should not trouble you that He is about to take you home and put you where you will be beyond the reach of adversaries. Bearing witness for Jesus is your main concern, and you cannot be stopped in it until it is finished; therefore, be at peace. Cruel slander, wicked misrepresentation, desertion of friends, betrayal by your most trusted friend, and whatever else may come your way cannot hinder the Lord's purpose concerning you. The Lord stands by you in the night of your sorrow, and He says, "You must still bear witness for Me." Be calm, therefore, and be filled with joy in the Lord.

If you do not need this promise just now, you may need it very soon. Treasure it up. Remember also to pray for missionaries and all persecuted ones, that the Lord would preserve them even to the completion of their lifework.

April 9

The Bible's Supreme Place

*Those who love Your law have great peace, and
nothing causes them to stumble. (Psalm 119:165)*

A true love for the great Book will bring us great peace from the great God and will be a great protection to us. Let us live constantly in the society of the law of the Lord, and it will breed in our hearts a restfulness that nothing else can. The Holy Spirit acts as a Comforter through the Word and sheds abroad those gentle influences that calm the tempests of the soul.

Nothing is a stumbling block to the person who has the Word of God dwelling in him richly (Colossians 3:16). He takes up his daily cross, and it becomes a delight. He is prepared for the fiery trial and does not consider it to be strange, so he is not utterly cast down by it. He is neither tripped by prosperity, as so many are, nor crushed by adversity, as others have been – for he lives beyond the changing circumstances of external life. When his Lord puts before him some great mystery of the faith that makes others cry, *This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?* (John 6:60), the believer accepts it without question, for his intellectual difficulties are overcome by his reverent awe of the law of the Lord, which to him is the supreme authority to which he joyfully bows.

Lord, work in us this love, this peace, and this rest today.

April 10

Look and Live

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it will come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." (Numbers 21:8)

This is a wonderful gospel symbol. Jesus, numbered with the transgressors, hangs before us on the cross. A look to Him will heal us of the serpent-bite of sin, and we will be healed at once. *When he looks at it, he will live.* Let the reader who is mourning his sinfulness note the words, *Everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.* Everyone who looks will find this true. I have found it so. I looked to Jesus and lived at once; I know I did. If you look to Jesus, you will live, too. It may be true that you are swelling with the venom and you see no hope. It is also true that there is no hope except this one, but this is no doubtful cure. It is certain. *Everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live.*

The bronze serpent was not lifted up as a curiosity to be gazed upon by the healthy, but its special purpose was for those who were bitten. Jesus died as a real Savior for real sinners. Whether the bite has made you a drunkard, a thief, or an immoral or a profane person, a look at the great Savior will heal you of these diseases of sin and will make you live in holiness and communion with God. Look and live.

April 11

Close Fellowship

"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jeremiah 31:34)

Truly, whatever else we do not know, we know the Lord. This promise is true today in our experience, and it is not a little promise. The least believer among us knows God in Christ Jesus. We may not know Him as fully as we desire, yet we truly and really know the Lord. We not only know doctrines about Him, but we know Him. He is our Father and our Friend. We are acquainted with Him personally. We can say, *My Lord and my God!* (John 20:28). We are on terms of close fellowship with God, and we spend many happy seasons in His holy company. We are no longer strangers to our God, but the secret of the Lord is with us (Psalm 25:14).

This is more than nature could have taught us. Flesh and blood has not revealed God to us. Christ Jesus has made known the Father to our hearts. If, then, the Lord has revealed Himself to us, is not this the fountain of all saving knowledge? To know God is eternal life. As soon as we become acquainted with God, we have the evidence of being made alive and being brought into newness of life. Rejoice in this knowledge, and glorify your God all day!

April 12

He Remembers No More

*I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will
remember no more. (Jeremiah 31:34)*

*W*hen we know the Lord, we receive forgiveness of sins. We know Him as the God of grace who passes by our transgressions. What a joyful discovery this is!

Notice how divinely this promise is worded: the Lord promises to remember our sins no more! Can God forget? He says He will, and He means what He says. He will regard us as though we had never sinned. The great atonement so effectively removed all sin that to the mind of God it no longer exists. The believer is now in Christ Jesus, as much accepted as Adam was in his innocence, and even more so, for he now wears a divine righteousness, while that of Adam was merely human.

The great Lord will not remember our sins so as to punish them. He will not love us one bit less because of them. Just as a debt ceases to be a debt when it is paid, even so does the Lord make a complete obliteration of the iniquity of His people.

When we are mourning over our transgressions and shortcomings, and this is our duty as long as we live, let us at the same time rejoice that they will never be mentioned against us. This makes us hate sin. God's free pardon makes us desirous never again to grieve Him by disobedience.

April 13

This Body Made Anew

*Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned
like unto his glorious body. (Philippians 3:21, KJV)*

Often when we are racked with pain and unable to think or worship, we feel that this indeed is *the body of our humble state*, and when we are tempted by the emotions that rise from the flesh, we do not think that the word “vile” is at all too vigorous a translation. Our bodies humble us, and that is about the best thing they do for us. Oh, that we were appropriately humble, because our bodies associate us with animals and even link us with the dust!

But our Savior, the Lord Jesus, will change all this. We will be made like His own body of glory. This will take place in all who believe in Jesus. By faith, their souls have been transformed, and their bodies will undergo such a renewal as will be appropriate for their regenerated spirits. We cannot say how soon this grand transformation will happen, but the thought of it should help us to bear the trials of today and all the troubles of the flesh. In a little while, we will be as Jesus is now. We will have no more aching heads, no more swollen limbs, no more dim eyes, and no more weak hearts. The old man will no longer be a collection of infirmities, nor the sick man a bundle of agony. *Fashioned like unto his glorious body*. What an expression! Even our flesh will rest in hope of such a resurrection!

April 14

My Choice Is His Choice

He chooses our inheritance for us. (Psalm 47:4)

*O*ur enemies would give us a very sad portion, but the choice is not in their hands. The Lord will give us our portion, and our place is appointed by His infinite wisdom. A wiser mind than our own arranges our destiny. God ordains all things, and we are glad to have it so. We choose for God to choose for us. If we could have our own way, we would want to let all things go in God's way.

Being aware of our own foolishness, we would not desire to rule our own destinies. We feel safer and more at ease when the Lord steers our vessel than we could possibly be if we could direct it according to our own judgment. We joyfully leave the painful present and the unknown future with our Father, our Savior, and our Comforter.

Lay down your desires at Jesus' feet today! If you have lately been somewhat defiant and self-willed, wanting to go your way instead of God's, now set aside your foolish self and place the reins in the Lord's hands. Say, "He will choose." If others dispute the sovereignty of the Lord and glory in the free will of man, you can answer them, "He will choose for me." It is my freest choice to let Him choose. As a free agent, I want Him to have absolute control.

April 15

Desires of the Righteous Granted

The desire of the righteous will be granted. (Proverbs 10:24)

Because it is a righteous desire, it is safe for God to grant it. It would be neither good for the person himself, nor for society at large, if such a promise were made to the unrighteous. Let us keep the Lord's commands, and He will rightfully have respect to our desires.

If righteous people desire unrighteous desires, they will not be granted to them; but then these are not their real desires, but are their wanderings or slips, and it is good that they would be refused. Their gracious desires will come before the Lord, and He will not tell them no.

Does the Lord deny us our requests for a time? Then let the promise for today encourage us to ask again. Has He denied us entirely? We will thank Him still, for it was always our desire that He would deny us if He thought that was best.

As to some things, we ask very boldly. Our main desires are for holiness, usefulness, Christlikeness, and preparedness for heaven. These are the desires of grace rather than of nature. These are the desires of the righteous man rather than of the mere man. God will not limit us in these things, but will do for us exceedingly abundantly. Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4). Today, my friend, ask in a big way!

April 16

All Turned to Holiness

In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "HOLY TO THE LORD." (Zechariah 14:20)

*W*hat a happy day it will be when all things will be consecrated, and the horses' bells will ring out holiness to the Lord! That day has come to me. Do I not make all things holy to God? These garments, when I put them on or take them off, will they not remind me of the righteousness of Christ Jesus my Lord? Will not my work be done as unto the Lord? Oh, that today my clothes may be priestly garments, my meals sacraments, my house a temple, my table an altar, my speech incense, and myself a priest! Lord, fulfill Your promise, and let nothing be common or unclean to me.

Let me expect this in faith. Believing it to be so, I will be helped to make it so. As I myself am the property of Jesus, my Lord can take an inventory of all I have, for it is entirely His own – and I resolve to prove it to be so by using it all for Him today. From morning until evening, I desire to direct all things by a happy and holy standard. My bells will ring; why shouldn't they? Even my horses will have bells. Who has as much right to music as the saints have? All my bells, my music, and my enjoyment will be turned to holiness and will ring out the name of the blessed God.

April 17

Enemies at Peace

When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (Proverbs 16:7)

I must make sure that my ways please the Lord. Even then I will have enemies, and maybe all the more certainly because I try to do that which is right in God's sight – but what a promise this is! The Lord will make the wrath of man to praise Him and will diminish it so that it will not distress me.

God can constrain an enemy to not harm me, even though he would like to do so. He did this with Laban, who pursued Jacob but did not dare to touch him (Genesis 31:29). God can subdue the wrath of the enemy and make him friendly, as He did with Esau, who met Jacob in a brotherly manner, even though Jacob had feared that he would smite him and his family with the sword (Genesis 32:8). The Lord can also convert a furious adversary into a brother in Christ and a fellow worker, as He did with Saul of Tarsus. Oh, that He would do this in every case where a persecuting spirit appears!

Happy is the person whose enemies are made to be to him what the lions were to Daniel in the den – quiet and friendly! When I meet death, who is called *the last enemy* (1 Corinthians 15:26), I pray that I will be at peace. Only let my great concern be to please the Lord in all things. Oh, for faith and holiness, for these are a pleasure unto the Most High!

April 18

He Never Fails

*I will be with you; I will not fail you
or forsake you. (Joshua 1:5)*

This word to Joshua is often quoted. It is the basis of that New Testament verse, He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Beloved – a life of warfare is before us, but the Lord of Hosts is with us. Are we called to lead a great but unsteady people? This promise guarantees us all the wisdom and prudence that we will need. Must we contend with cunning and powerful enemies? Here is strength and valor, courage and victory. Do we have a broad heritage to win? By this sign we will achieve our purpose: the Lord Himself is with us.

It would certainly be tragic to us if God could fail us, but since this can never be, the winds of anxiety are laid to sleep in the caverns of divine faithfulness. On no occasion will the Lord desert us. Whatever happens, He will be at our side. Friends may leave us. Their help is but as an April shower, but God is faithful. Jesus is the same forever, and the Holy Spirit abides in us.

Be calm and hopeful today. Clouds might gather, but the Lord can blow them away. Since God will not fail me, my faith will not fail, and as He will not forsake me, neither will I forsake Him. Oh, for a restful faith!

April 19

An Expert Searcher

Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out." (Ezekiel 34:11)

*H*e does this at the beginning when His elect are like wandering sheep that do not know the Shepherd or the fold. How wonderfully the Lord finds out His chosen! Jesus is great as a seeking Shepherd, as well as a saving Shepherd. Though many of those His Father gave Him have gone as near to hell's gate as they possibly can, yet the Lord by searching and seeking finds them and draws near to them in grace. He has sought us out. Let us have good hope for those who are pressed upon our hearts in prayer, for He will find them also.

The Lord repeats this process when any of His flock stray from the pastures of truth and holiness. They may fall into clear error, sad sin, and grievous hardness, but the Lord, who has become a pledge for them to His Father, will not allow one of them to go so far as to perish. He will by providence and grace pursue them into foreign lands, into places of poverty, into dens of obscurity, and into depths of despair. He will not lose one of all whom the Father has given Him. It is a point of honor with Jesus to seek and to save the entire flock without a single exception. What a promise to plead if I am compelled to cry, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep!"

April 20

By Faith, Not Feeling

The righteous man will live by faith. (Romans 1:17)

I will not die. I can and I do believe in the Lord my God, and this faith will keep me alive. I want to be numbered among those who are righteous and just in their lives, but even if I were perfect, I would not try to live by my righteousness. I would cling to the work of the Lord Jesus and still live by faith in Him and by nothing else. If I were able to give my body to be burned for my Lord Jesus, yet I would not trust in my own courage and commitment, but would still live by faith.

Were I a martyr at the stake,
I'd plead my Saviour's name;
Intreat a pardon for His sake,
And urge no other claim.⁵

To live by faith is a far more certain and happier thing than to live by feelings or by works. The branch, by living in the vine, lives a better life than it would live by itself, even if it were possible at all for it to live apart from the stem. To live by clinging to Jesus, by deriving all from Him, is a sweet and sacred thing. If even the most righteous people must live in this way, how much more must I, who am a poor sinner!

*Lord, I believe. I must trust You completely.
What else can I do? Trusting You is my life.*

5 This is from a hymn by Thomas Greene that begins with "The more my conduct I survey."

April 21

God Repays

*One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and
He will repay him for his good deed. (Proverbs 19:17)*

We are to give to the poor out of compassion. We should not give to be seen and applauded, much less to get influence over them, but we should give them help out of pure sympathy and compassion.

We must not expect to get anything back from the poor, not even gratitude, but we should regard what we have done as a loan to the Lord. He takes responsibility for the debt, and if we look to Him in the matter, we do not need to look to the second party. What an honor the Lord bestows upon us when He lowers Himself to borrow from us! That merchant is greatly favored who has the Lord on his books. It would seem a pity to have such a name down for a small amount; let us make it a large amount. Let us help the next needy person who comes our way.

As for repayment, we can hardly think of it, and yet here is the Lord's agreement to repay. Blessed be His name, His promise to pay is better than gold and silver. Are we running a little short through the depression of the times? We can humbly step out and present this bill at the bank of faith. Have any of you oppressed or neglected the poor? Poor soul. May the Lord forgive you.

April 22

Power to Raise

The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises up those who are bowed down. (Psalm 146:8)

*A*m I bowed down? Then let me urge this word of grace before the Lord. It is His way, His custom, His promise, and His delight to raise up those who are bowed down. Is it a sense of sin and a resulting depression of spirit that distresses me? Then the work of Jesus is, in this case, made and provided to raise me up into rest. *O Lord, raise me, for Your mercy's sake!*

Is it a sad bereavement or a great disappointment in circumstances? Here again the Comforter has undertaken to comfort. What a mercy for us that Lord would send His Spirit, the Comforter! This work will be well done since such a glorious One has made it His special care.

Some people are so bowed down that only Jesus can loose them from their infirmity, but He can do it, and He will. He can raise us up to health, to hope, and to happiness. He has often done so under previous trials, and He is the same Savior and will repeat His deeds of lovingkindness. We who today are bowed down and sorrowful will yet be set on high, and those who now mock us will be greatly ashamed. What an honor to be raised up by the Lord! It is worthwhile to be bowed down so that we can experience His uplifting power.

April 23

No Fear of Death

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

We must endure the first death unless the Lord should suddenly come to His temple. Let us remain ready for this, awaiting it without fear, since Jesus has transformed death from a dreary cavern into a passage leading to glory.

The thing to be feared is not the first death, but the second death – not the parting of the soul from the body, but the final separation of the entire person from God. This is death indeed. This death kills all peace, joy, happiness, and hope. When God is gone, all is gone. Such a death is far worse than ceasing to exist. It is existence, but without the life that makes existence worth having.

Now if by God's grace we fight on to the end and conquer in the glorious war, no second death can lay its cold finger upon us. We will have no fear of death and hell, for we will receive the unfading crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4). How this prepares us for the fight! Eternal life is worth a life's battle. To escape the hurt of the second death is something worth struggling for throughout a lifetime.

*Lord, give us faith so that we may overcome, and
then grant us grace to remain unharmed even
though sin and Satan follow at our heels!*

April 24

Condition of Blessing

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. (Malachi 3:10)

Many read and plead this promise without noticing the condition upon which the blessing is promised. We cannot expect heaven to be opened or a blessing poured out unless we pay our dues unto the Lord our God and to His cause. There would be no lack of funds for holy purposes if all professing Christians paid their fair share.

Many are poor because they rob God. Many churches, too, miss the visitation of the Spirit because they starve their ministries. If there is no bodily food for God's servants, we do not need to wonder if their ministry has had little food in it for our souls. When missions languish for support and the work of the Lord is hindered by a lack of funds, how can we look for a large amount of prosperity of soul?

What have I given to God lately? Have I been unwilling to give to my God? Have I been stingy with my Savior? This will never do. Let me give my Lord Jesus His tithe by helping the poor and aiding His work, and then I will prove His power to bless me on a large scale.

April 25

What to Leave Children

*A righteous man who walks in his integrity – how
blessed are his sons after him. (Proverbs 20:7)*

Anxiety about our family is natural, but we will be wise if we turn it into concern about our own character. If we walk before the Lord in integrity, we will do more to bless our descendants than if we left them large estates. A father's holy life is a rich legacy for his sons.

The upright man leaves his heirs his example, and this in itself will be a mine of true wealth. How many men can trace their success in life to the example of their parents!

He also leaves them his reputation. People think better of us as the sons of a man who could be trusted, the successors of a tradesman with an excellent reputation, Oh, that all young men were anxious to keep up the family name!


Above all, he leaves his children his prayers and the blessing of a God who hears prayer, and these make our offspring to be favored among the sons of men. God will save them even after we are dead. Oh, that they might be saved at once!

Our integrity might be God's means of saving our sons and daughters. If they see the truth of our Christianity proved by our lives, it may be that they will believe in Jesus for themselves. *Lord, fulfill this word to my household!*

April 26

Gracious Dealing

*The Lord your God will bless you in whatever
you do. (Deuteronomy 15:18)*

 An Israelite master was to give his bondservant liberty in due time, and when the bondservant left his service, he was to help him get started in life with a generous portion. This was to be done warmly and cheerfully, and the Lord promised to bless the generous act. The spirit of this precept, and indeed the whole law of Christ, obligates us to treat people well. We should remember how the Lord has dealt with us, and this makes it absolutely necessary that we should deal graciously with others. It is appropriate for those who are the children of a gracious God to be generous. How can we expect our great Master to bless us in our business if we oppress those who serve us?

What a blessing is set here before the generous mind! To be blessed in all that we do is to be blessed indeed. The Lord will send us this partly in prosperity, partly in contentment of mind, and partly in a sense of His favor, which is the best of all blessings. He can make us feel that we are under His special care and are surrounded by His special love. This makes this earthly life a joyous prelude to the life to come. God's blessing is more than a fortune. It makes rich and *adds no sorrow to it* (Proverbs 10:22).

April 27

God Finished His Work

The Lord will accomplish what concerns me. (Psalm 138:8)

He who has begun will carry on the work that is being carried out within my soul (Philippians 1:6). The Lord is concerned about everything that concerns me. The Lord will watch over, preserve, and carry out to completion all that is now good, but not perfect. This is a great comfort. I could not perfect the work of grace myself. I am quite sure of that, for I fail every day. I have only held on as long as I have because the Lord has helped me. If the Lord were to leave me, all my past experience would go for nothing, and I would perish from the way.

But the Lord will continue to bless me. He will perfect my faith, my love, my character, and my lifework. He will do this because He has begun a work in me. He gave me the concern I feel, and, in a measure, He has fulfilled my gracious ambitions. He never leaves a work unfinished; that would not be for His glory, nor would it be like Him. He knows how to accomplish His gracious purpose, and although my own evil nature and the world and the devil all scheme to hinder Him, I do not doubt His promise. He will accomplish that which concerns me, and I will praise Him forever.

*Lord, let Your gracious work in me
make some advance today!*

April 28

It Becomes Mutual

I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. (2 Corinthians 6:16)

*T*his is a mutual interest. Each belongs to each. God is the portion of His people, and the chosen people are the portion of their God. The saints find their greatest possession in God, and He considers them to be His special treasure (Exodus 19:5). What a wealth of comfort lies in this fact for each believer!

This happy condition of mutual interest leads to mutual consideration. God will always think of His own people, and they will always think of Him. My God will perform all things for me today; what can I do for Him? My thoughts should run toward Him, for He thinks about me. Let me make sure that it is so, that I am thinking about God and what pleases Him, and not merely be content with admitting that it should be so.

This, again, leads to mutual fellowship. God dwells in us, and we dwell in Him. He walks with us, and we walk with Him.

Oh, for grace to regard the Lord as my God, to trust Him and to serve Him, as He deserves! Oh, that I could love, worship, adore, and obey Him in spirit and in truth! This is my heart's desire. When I attain to it, I will have found my heaven.

*Lord, help me! Be my God in helping me to
know You as my God, for Jesus' sake.*

April 29

Forget and Forgive

*Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the Lord,
and He will save you. (Proverbs 20:22)*

Do not be in a hurry. Let your anger cool down. Say nothing and do nothing to avenge yourself. You will be sure to act unwisely if you take up your weapons and fight your own battles, and certainly you will not show the spirit of the Lord Jesus. It is nobler to forgive and let the offense pass. To let an injury fester inside you and to think about revenge is to keep old wounds open and to make new ones. It is better to forget and forgive.

Maybe you say that you must do something or you will suffer much loss; then do what this promise advises: Wait for the Lord, and He will save you. This advice will not cost you money, but it is worth far more. Be calm and quiet. Wait upon the Lord; tell Him about the wrong done to you. Spread Rabshakeh's letter before the Lord (Isaiah 37:14), and this of itself will help to ease your burdened mind. Besides, there is the promise: He will save you. God will find a way of deliverance for you. Neither you nor I can guess how He will do it, but do it He will. If the Lord saves you, this will be much better than getting into petty quarrels and covering yourself with filth by wrestling with the unclean. Do not be angry any longer. Leave your grievance with the Judge of all.

April 30

The Overcomer's Reward

To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it. (Revelation 2:17)

Be stirred up to persevere in the holy war, for the reward of victory is great. Today we eat of heavenly food that falls around our camps – the food of the wilderness, the food that comes from heaven, the food that never fails the pilgrims to Canaan. But there is reserved for us in Christ Jesus a still higher degree of spiritual life and a food for it that yet remains hidden from our experience. In the golden pot that was stored in the ark, there was a portion of manna hidden away which, although kept for ages, never grew stale. No one ever saw it. It was hidden with the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies. Even so, the highest life of the believer is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).

We will come to it soon. Being made victorious through the grace of our Lord Jesus, we will eat of the King's meat and feed upon royal delicacies. We will feed upon Jesus. He is our "hidden manna," as well as the manna of the wilderness. He is all in all to us in our highest condition, as well as in our lowest. He helps us to fight, gives us the victory, and then is Himself our reward.

Lord, help me to overcome.

May

May 1

Full of Song

*The mountains and the hills will break forth into
shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the
field will clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:12)*

*W*hen sin is pardoned, our greatest sorrow is gone, and our truest pleasure begins. This is the kind of joy that the Lord gives to His reconciled ones – it overflows and fills all nature with delight. The material world has undiscovered music in it, and a renewed heart knows how to bring it out and make it vocal. Creation is the organ, and a gracious person finds out its keys, lays his hand upon it, and wakes the whole system of the universe to the harmony of praise. Mountains and hills and other great objects are, as it were, the bass of the chorus, while the trees of the wood and all things that have life take up the air of the melodious song.

When God's Word is made to prosper among us and souls are saved, then everything seems full of song. When we hear the confessions of young believers and the testimonies of well-instructed saints, we are made so happy that we must praise the Lord, and then it seems as if rocks and hills and woods and fields echo our notes of joy and turn the world into an orchestra.

*Lord, on this happy first day of May, lead me out into Your
melodious world as rich in praise as a lark in full song.*

May 2

Spiritual Sowing

*The one who sows to the Spirit will from the
Spirit reap eternal life. (Galatians 6:8)*

Sowing looks like a losing business, for we put good corn into the ground never to see it anymore. Sowing to the Spirit seems to be a very imaginative and dreamy thing to do, for we deny ourselves and apparently get nothing for it. Yet if we sow to the Spirit by studying to live unto God, seeking to obey the will of God, and laying ourselves out to promote His honor, we will not sow in vain. Life – everlasting life – will be our reward. We begin to enjoy this life here as we enter into the knowledge of God, communion with God, and enjoyment of God. This life flows on like an ever-deepening, ever-widening river until it carries us to the ocean of infinite delight, where the life of God is ours forever and ever.

Let us not sow to our flesh today, for the harvest will be corruption since the flesh always leans that way. Instead, with holy self-conquest, let us live for the highest, purest, and most spiritual purposes, seeking to honor our most holy Lord by obeying His most gracious Spirit. What a harvest that will be when we reap life everlasting! What sheaves of endless delight will be reaped! What a festival that harvest will be!

Lord, make us reapers like this, for Your Son's sake.

May 3

Listen for the Signal

It will be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you will act promptly, for then the Lord will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines. (2 Samuel 5:24)

There are signs of the Lord's moving that should move us. The Spirit of God blows where He wishes, and we hear the sound of it (John 3:8). That is the time for us to be alert more than ever. We must seize the golden opportunity and make the most we can of it. It is our duty to fight the Philistines at all times, but when the Lord Himself goes out before us, then we should be especially valiant in the war.

The breeze stirred the tops of the trees. David and his men took this for the signal for an onslaught, and at their advance the Lord Himself smote the Philistines. Oh, that the Lord this day may give us an opening to speak for Him with many of our friends! Let us be on the watch to avail ourselves of the hopeful opening when it comes. Maybe this will be a day of good tidings, a season of soul winning. Let us keep our ears open to hear the rustle of the wind, with our minds ready to obey the signal. Is not this promise, Then the Lord will have gone out before you, sufficient encouragement to be courageous? Since the Lord goes before us, we dare not hold back.

May 4

Victory in Reverses

*Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though
I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness,
the Lord is a light for me. (Micah 7:8)*

This may express the feelings of someone who is downtrodden and oppressed. Our enemy may put out our light for a season. There is sure hope for us in the Lord, and if we are trusting in Him and holding fast our integrity, our downcast and dark season will soon be over. The insults of the enemy are only for a moment. The Lord will soon turn their laughter into lamentation and our sighing into singing.

What if the great enemy of souls triumphs over us for a while, as he has triumphed over better people than we are? Let us still take heart, for we will overcome him before long. We will rise from our fall, for our God has not fallen, and He will lift us up. We will not abide in darkness, although for the moment we sit in it. Our Lord is the fountain of light, and He will soon bring us a joyful day. Let us not despair or even doubt. One turn of the wheel, and the lowest will be at the top. Woe unto those who laugh now, for they will mourn and weep when their boasting is turned into everlasting contempt. But blessed are all holy mourners, for they will be divinely comforted.

May 5

Why Remain Captive

*The Lord your God will restore you from
captivity. (Deuteronomy 30:3)*

God's own people can sell themselves into captivity by sin. This is a very bitter fruit of an exceedingly bitter root. What a bondage it is when the child of God is sold under sin, held in chains by Satan, deprived of his liberty, and robbed of his power in prayer and his delight in the Lord! Let us watch so that we do not come into such bondage, but if this has already happened to us, let us not despair.

We cannot be held in slavery forever. The Lord Jesus has paid too high a price for our redemption to leave us in the enemy's hand. The way to freedom is to return to the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 30:2). Where we first found salvation, we will find it again. At the foot of Christ's cross, confessing sin, we will find pardon and deliverance. Moreover, the Lord wants us to obey His voice according to all that He has commanded us, and we must do this with all our heart and all our soul – and then our captivity will end.

Often depression of spirit and great misery of soul are removed as soon as we leave our idols and bow ourselves in obedience before the living God. We do not need to be captives. We can return to Zion's citizenship, and that quickly.

Lord, restore us from captivity!

May 6

Cure for Envy

Do not let your heart envy sinners, but live in the fear of the Lord always. Surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off. (Proverbs 23:17-18)

*W*hen we see the wicked prosper, we are inclined to envy them. When we hear the noise of their laughter while our own spirit is heavy, we almost think that they have the best of it. This is foolish and sinful. If we knew them better, and especially if we remembered what their end will be, we would pity them.

The cure for envy lies in living under a constant sense of the divine presence, worshiping God and communing with Him all day long, however long the day may seem. True Christianity lifts the soul into a higher region where the judgment becomes more clear and the desires are more elevated. The more of heaven there is in our lives, the less of earth we will covet. The fear of God casts out the envy of men.

The deathblow of envy is a calm consideration of the future. The wealth and glory of the ungodly are a vain show. This pompous appearance flashes for an hour and then is extinguished. How is the prosperous sinner any better off for his prosperity when judgment overtakes him? As for the godly man, his end is peace and blessedness, and no one can rob him of his joy. Therefore, let him renounce envy and be filled with sweet contentment.

May 7

Let No Evil Remain

Nothing from that which is put under the ban will cling to your hand, in order that the Lord may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers. (Deuteronomy 13:17)

*I*srael must conquer idolatrous cities and destroy all the spoil; everything that had been polluted by idolatry as an accursed thing was to be burned with fire. Sin of all kinds must be treated by Christians in the same way. We must not allow a single evil habit to remain. We must fight and conquer sins of all kinds and sizes, whether of the body, the mind, or the spirit. We do not look upon this giving up of evil as deserving mercy, but we regard it as a fruit of the grace of God, and so we would not miss the sin at all.

When God causes us to have no mercy on our sins, then He has great mercy on us. When we are angry with evil, God is no longer angry with us. When we double our efforts against iniquity, the Lord multiplies our blessings. The way of peace, growth, safety, and joy in Christ Jesus will be found by following these words: *Nothing from that which is put under the ban will cling to your hand.* Compassion, prosperity, increase, and joy will surely be given to those who put away sin with wholehearted resolve.

Lord, purify me today.

May 8

Help Wanted

Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that will ye receive. (Matthew 20:7 KJV)

*Y*es, there is work in Christ's vineyard for old bodies. It is the eleventh hour, and yet He will let us work. What grace is this! Surely every older person should jump at this invitation! After people are advanced in years, nobody wants them as servants. They go from shop to shop, and employers look at their gray hairs and shake their heads. But Jesus will employ older people, and He will give them good wages, too! This is mercy indeed.

Lord, help the aged to enlist in Your service without an hour's delay.

But will the Lord pay wages to worn-out elderly people? Do not doubt it. He says He will give you what is right if you will work in His field. He will surely give you grace here and glory hereafter. He will give you present comfort and future rest. He will provide you with strength equal to your day and with a vision of glory when the night of death comes on. The Lord Jesus will as freely give all these to the aged convert as to one who enters His service in his youth.

Let me tell this to some unsaved older man or woman, asking the Lord to bless it for Jesus' sake. Where can I find such people? I will be on the lookout for them and will tenderly tell them the news.

May 9

Trust Means Joy

*Our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust
in His holy name. (Psalm 33:21)*

The root of faith produces the flower of a joyous heart. We may not rejoice at first, but it comes in due time. We trust the Lord when we are sad, and in due season He so answers our trust that our faith turns to fruition, and we rejoice in the Lord. Doubt breeds distress, but trust means joy in the long run.

The assurance expressed by the psalmist in this verse is really a promise held out in the hands of holy confidence. Oh, for grace to appropriate it. If we do not rejoice at this moment, we will still do so as certainly as David's God is our God.

Let us meditate upon the Lord's holy name so that we can better trust Him and rejoice even more readily. God is holy, just, true, gracious, faithful, and unchanging. Is not such a God to be trusted? He is all wise, almighty, and everywhere present. Can we not cheerfully rely upon Him? Yes, we will do so at once and will do so without hesitation. Jehovah-Jireh will provide (Genesis 22:14). Jehovah-Shalom will send peace (Judges 6:24). Jehovah-Tsidkenu will justify (Jeremiah 23:6). Jehovah-Shammah will be forever near (Ezekiel 48:35). In Jehovah-Nissi we will conquer every foe (Exodus 17:15). *Those who know Your name will put their trust in You* (Psalm 9:10), and they that trust You will rejoice in You, O Lord (Psalm 5:11).

May 10

Fear Only God

We confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:6)

Because God will never leave or forsake us, we can well be content with such things as we have (Hebrews 13:5). Since the Lord is ours, we cannot be left without a friend, a treasure, and a dwelling place. This assurance may make us feel quite independent of people. Under such great support, we do not feel tempted to cringe before our fellow men and ask them for permission to call our lives our own, but what we say, we boldly say and defy contradiction.

He who fears God has nothing else to fear. We should stand in such awe of the living Lord that all the threats that can be used by the proudest persecutor would have no more effect upon us than the whistling of the wind. People today can do no more against us than they could when the apostle wrote the verse at the top of this page. Torture racks and burning people at the stake are out of fashion. Giant Pope cannot burn the pilgrims now.⁶ If the followers of false teachers try cruel mockery and scorn, we are not surprised, for the people of this world cannot love the children of God. So what? We will bear the world's scorn. It does not break our bones. With God helping us, let us be bold, and when the world rages, let it rage – but let us not fear it.

6 "Giant Pope" is a reference to a character in *Pilgrim's Progress*, available from Aneko Press.

May 11

Wait for the Finals

Gad, a troop will overcome him: but he will overcome at the last. (Genesis 49:19 KJV)

Some of us have been like the tribe of Gad. Our adversaries were too many for us for a while; they came upon us like a troop. They overcame us for a while, and they greatly rejoiced because of their temporary victory. In doing so, they only proved the first part of the family heritage to be really ours, for Christ's people, like Dan, will have a troop overcoming them. Being overcome in this way is very painful, and we would have despaired if we had not by faith believed the second line of our father's benediction: *He will overcome at the last*. "All's well that ends well," said Shakespeare, the world's poet, and he spoke the truth. A war is not to be judged by the initial success or defeats, but by that which happens *at the last*. The Lord will give to truth and righteousness victory *at the last*, and as John Bunyan says, that means forever, for nothing can come after the last.

What we need is patient perseverance in doing good (Galatians 6:9), along with calm confidence in our glorious Captain. Christ, our Lord Jesus, will teach us His holy art of setting the face like a flint (Isaiah 50:7) to go through with work or suffering until we can say, *It is finished* (John 19:30). Hallelujah! Victory! Victory! We believe the promise. *He will overcome at the last*.

May 12

Servants Honored

He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who cares for his master will be honored. (Proverbs 27:18)

*H*e who tends the fig tree has figs for his efforts, and he who serves a good master has honor as his reward. Truly the Lord Jesus is the very best of masters, and it is an honor to be allowed to do even the smallest act for His sake. To serve some masters is to watch over a crabapple tree and eat the crabapples as one's wages, but to serve the Lord Jesus is to keep a fig tree of the sweetest figs. His service is in itself delight, continuance in it is promotion, success in it is blessedness below, and the reward for it is glory above.

Our greatest honors will be gathered in that season when the figs will be ripe, even in the next world. Angels who now wait upon us will carry us home when our day's work is done. Heaven, where Jesus is, will be our honorable mansion, eternal delight will be our honorable portion, and the Lord Himself will be our honorable companion. Who can imagine the full meaning of this promise: *He who cares for his master will be honored?*

Lord, help me to wait upon my Master. Let me leave all idea of honor to the hour when You Yourself will honor me. May the Holy Spirit make me a humble, patient worker and waiter!

May 13

Day Is at Hand

And I will give him the morning star. (Revelation 2:28)

Until the cool of the day when the shadows flee away (Song of Solomon 2:17), what a blessing it is to see in Jesus *the morning star*! I remember when the newspapers reported the sensational story that the star of Bethlehem had again appeared. We later learned that it was only the morning star, but no great mistake had been made after all.

It is best to see Jesus as the sun, but when we cannot do so, the next best thing is to see Him as that star that prophesies the day and shows that the eternal light is near at hand. If I am not today all that I hope to be, I still see Jesus, and that assures me that I will one day be like Him. A sight of Jesus by faith is the pledge of beholding Him in His glory and being transformed into His image. If I do not now have all the light and joy I could desire, yet I will have it, for as certainly as I see the morning star, I will see the day. The morning star is never far from the sun.

Has the Lord given you the morning star? Do you hold fast that truth, grace, hope, and love that the Lord has given you? If so, then in this you have the dawn of coming glory. He who makes you overcome evil and persevere in righteousness has therein given you the morning star.

May 14

Surgery for Healing

*Come, let us return to the Lord. For He has
torn us, but He will heal us; He has wounded
us, but He will bandage us. (Hosea 6:1)*

*T*he Lord often tears before He heals. This is the honest love of His heart and the sure surgery of His hand. He also bruises before He binds up, or else it would be uncertain work. The law comes before the gospel, and the sense of need comes before the supply of it. Are you now under the convincing, crushing hand of the Spirit? Have you received the spirit of bondage again to fear (Romans 8:15)? This is a useful preparation to real gospel healing and binding up.

Do not despair, dear heart, but come to the Lord with all your jagged wounds, dark bruises, and running sores. He alone can heal, and He delights to do it. It is our Lord's role to bind up the brokenhearted, and He is gloriously at home at it. Let us not linger, but at once return unto the Lord from whom we have gone astray. Let us show Him our gaping wounds and entreat Him to know His own work and complete it. Will a surgeon make an incision and then leave his patient to bleed to death? Will the Lord pull down our old house and then refuse to build us a better one? Do you ever deliberately increase the misery of poor anxious souls?

That is far from You, O Lord.

May 15

God's High Places

*I will set him securely on high, because he
has known My name. (Psalm 91:14)*

Does the Lord say this to me? Yes, if I have known His name. Blessed be the Lord, I am not a stranger to Him. I have tested Him, proved Him, and known Him, and therefore I trust Him. I know His name as a sin-hating God, for by His Spirit's convincing power I have been taught that He will never overlook evil. I also know Him as the sin-pardoning God in Christ Jesus, for He has forgiven me of all my sins. His name is faithfulness, and I know it, for He has never forsaken me, even though my troubles have multiplied upon me.

This knowledge is a gift of grace, and the Lord makes it to be the reason why He grants another gift of grace – namely, setting us on high. This is grace upon grace. Observe that if we climb on high, the position may be dangerous; but if the Lord sets us there, it is safe. He may raise us to great usefulness, to eminent experience, to success in service, to leadership among workers, or to a father's place among the little ones. If He does not do this, He may set us on high by close fellowship, clear insight, holy triumph, and gracious anticipation of eternal glory. When God sets us on high, Satan himself cannot pull us down. Oh, that this may be our case all throughout this day!

May 16

We Receive as We Give

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will
receive mercy. (Matthew 5:7)*

*I*t is not right that the person who will not forgive should be forgiven, nor will he who will not give to the poor have his own needs met. God will measure to us with our own bushels, and those who have been hard masters and hard creditors will find that the Lord will deal harshly with them. *Judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy (James 2:13).*

Let us try to give and to forgive today. Let us think about the two bears: bear and forbear. Let us be kind, gentle, and tender. Let us not put harsh interpretations upon people's conduct, nor drive hard bargains, nor pick foolish quarrels, nor be difficult to please. Certainly we want to be blessed, and we also want to obtain mercy; let us be merciful, then, so we can have mercy.

Let us fulfill the condition so that we can earn the beatitude. Is it not a pleasant duty to be kind? Is there not much more sweetness in it than in being angry and ungenerous? There is a blessedness in the thing itself! Moreover, the obtaining of mercy is a rich reward. What else but sovereign grace could suggest such a promise as this? We are merciful to our fellow human beings even in little things, and the Lord forgives us all our debt (Matthew 18:21-35).

May 17

No Need to Be Sparing

The blameless will inherit good. (Proverbs 28:10)

The book of Proverbs is also a book of promises. Promises should be proverbs among the people of God. The one in our text is a very remarkable one. We are accustomed to think of our good things as not being ours for long, but here we are told that we will possess them. All the malice and cunning of our enemies cannot work our destruction. They will fall into the pit that they have dug (Psalm 7:15). Our inheritance is so deeply settled that we will not be kept from it, nor so turned out of the way as to miss it. But what do we have now?

We have a quiet conscience through the precious blood of Jesus. We have the love of God set upon us beyond all change. We have power with God in prayer in all time of need. We have the providence of God to watch over us, the angels of God to minister to us, and above all, the Spirit of God to dwell in us. In fact, all things are ours. *Whether . . . things present or things to come; all things belong to you* (1 Corinthians 3:22). Jesus is ours. Hallelujah! Let us not mope and whine and be limited and live in drudgery since we have good things in possession. Let us live in our God and rejoice in Him all day long.

Help us, O Holy Spirit!

May 18

Losses Overcome

*I will make up to you for the years that the
swarming locust has eaten. (Joel 2:25)*

*Y*es, those wasted years over which we ache will be restored to us. God can give us such abundant grace that we will crowd as much service into the remainder of our days as will somewhat make up for those years of sinfulness over which we mourn in humble repentance. The locusts of backsliding, worldliness, and lukewarmness are now viewed by us as a terrible plague. Oh, that they had never come near us! The Lord in mercy has now taken them away, and we are full of zeal to serve Him.

Blessed be His name! We can raise such harvests of spiritual graces as will make our former emptiness to disappear. Through rich grace, we can benefit from our bitter experience and use it to warn others. We can become more rooted in humility, childlike dependence, and penitent spirituality by reason of our former shortcomings. If we are the more watchful, zealous, and tender, we will gain by our lamentable losses. The wasted years, by a miracle of love, can be restored. Does it seem too great a blessing? Let us believe for it and live for it, and we may yet realize it, even as Peter became a more useful man after his presumption was cured by his discovered weakness.

Lord, help us by Your grace.

May 19

We May Speak for God

Therefore, thus says the Lord, "If you return, then I will restore you – before Me you will stand; and if you extract the precious from the worthless, You will become My spokesman. (Jeremiah 15:19)

For Jeremiah! Yet why do we say so? The weeping prophet was one of the best servants of God and was honored by Him above many. He was hated for speaking the truth. The word that was so sweet to him was bitter to his hearers, yet he was accepted by his Lord. He was commanded to abide in his faithfulness, for then the Lord would continue to speak through him. He was to deal boldly and truthfully with people and was to perform the Lord's winnowing work upon the professors of his day, and then the Lord gave him this word: You will become My spokesman.

What an honor! Should not every preacher – every believer – covet it? What a marvel it is for God to speak by us! We will speak sure, pure truth, and we will speak it with power. Our word will not return empty (Isaiah 55:11). It will be a blessing to those who receive it, and those who refuse it will do so at their peril. Our lips will feed many. We will awake the sleeping and will call the dead to life.

O dear reader, pray that it may be so with all the sent servants of our Lord.

May 20

We Dare Not Doubt

I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. (Isaiah 45:2)

*T*his was for Cyrus, but it is forever the heritage of all the Lord's own spiritual servants. If we go forward by faith, our way will be cleared for us. Twists and turns of human craft and satanic subtlety will be made straight for us. We will not need to track their devious windings. The gates of brass will be broken, and the iron bars that fastened them will be cut apart. We will not need the battering ram or the crowbar. The Lord Himself will do the impossible for us, and the unexpected will be a fact.

Let us not sit down in cowardly fear. Let us press onward in the path of duty, for the Lord hath said it: *I will go before you.* We do not need to try to figure out and understand the reason for the Lord's orders, but it is our duty to courageously dash forward. It is the Lord's work, and He will enable us to do it. All obstacles must yield before Him. He has said, *I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars.* What can hinder His purpose or resist His decrees? Those who serve God have infinite resources. The way is clear to faith, though it may be barred to human strength. When God says, *I will*, as He does twice in this promise, we dare not doubt.

May 21

Rain Without Clouds? Never!

*If the clouds are full, they pour out rain
upon the earth. (Ecclesiastes 11:3)*

Why, then, do we dread the clouds that now darken our sky? It is true that for a while they hide the sun, but the sun is not extinguished. It will shine out again before long. Meanwhile, those black clouds are filled with rain, and the blacker they are, the more likely they are to yield plentiful showers. How can we have rain without clouds?

Our troubles have always brought us blessings, and they always will. They are the dark chariots of bright grace. These clouds will empty themselves before long, and every tender herb will be happier because of the shower. Our God may drench us with grief, but He will not drown us with wrath; no – He will refresh us with mercy. Our Lord's love letters often come to us in black-edged envelopes. His wagons rumble, but they are loaded with benefits. His rod blossoms with sweet flowers and nourishing fruits. Let us not worry about the clouds, but let us sing because May flowers are brought to us through the April clouds and showers.

*O Lord, the clouds are the dust of Your feet! How near
You are in the cloudy and dark day! Love beholds You
and is glad. Faith sees the clouds emptying themselves
and making the little hills rejoice on every side.*

May 22

Song of Confidence

*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;
You will stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my
enemies, and Your right hand will save me. (Psalm 138:7)*

*I*t is difficult walking in the midst of trouble, but it can be blessed walking since there is a special promise for it. Give me a promise, and what is the trouble? What does my Lord teach me here to say? It is this: You will revive me. I will have more life, more energy, and more faith. Is it not often the case that trouble revives us – like a breath of cold air when one is ready to faint?

How angry my enemies are, and especially the archenemy! Will I stretch forth my hand and fight my enemies? No. My hand is better employed in doing service for my Lord. Besides, there is no need, for my God will use His far-reaching arm, and He will deal with them far better than I could if I were to try. “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord (Romans 12:19). He will save me with His own right hand of power and wisdom, and what more can I desire?

Come and talk this promise over to yourself until you can use it as the song of your confidence and the solace of your holiness. Pray to be revived yourself, and leave the rest with the Lord, who accomplishes all things for you (Psalm 57:2).

May 23

Full Reliance on God

For he will deliver the needy when he cries for help, the afflicted also, and him who has no helper. (Psalm 72:12)

The needy cries out; what else can he do? His cry is heard by God; what else does he need to do? If you are in need, begin crying out at once, for this will be your wisdom. Do not cry in the ears of friends, for even if they can help you, it is only because the Lord allows them to. The nearest way is to go straight to God and let your cry come up before Him. Straightforward makes the best runner; run to the Lord and not to secondary causes.

Maybe you say, "I have no friend or helper." That is so much the better, for you can rely upon God in both capacities – as without supplies and without helpers. Make your double need your double plea. Even for worldly mercies you can wait upon God, for He cares for His children in these temporary concerns. As for spiritual necessities, which are the heaviest of all, the Lord will hear your cry and will deliver you and provide for you.

O poor friend, test your rich God. O helpless one, lean on His help. He has never failed me, and I am sure He will never fail you. Come as a beggar, and God will not refuse to give you help. Come with no plea but His grace. Jesus is King. Will He let you perish from need? What! Did you forget this?

May 24

One Is a Majority!

*One of your men puts to flight a thousand, for
the Lord your God is He who fights for you,
just as He promised you. (Joshua 23:10)*

*W*hy count heads? One man with God is a majority, even if there are a thousand on the other side. Sometimes our helpers may be too many for God to work with, as was the case with Gideon, who could do nothing until he had increased his forces by thinning out their numbers (Judges 7:2). The Lord's hosts are never too few, though. When God wanted to start a nation, He called Abram alone and blessed him. When He wanted to conquer proud Pharaoh, He did not use any armies, but only Moses and Aaron. The "one-man ministry," as certain wise men call it, has been used far more of the Lord than trained groups with their officers. Did all the Israelites together slay as many as Samson did by himself? Saul and his army slew their thousands, but *David his ten thousands* (1 Samuel 18:7).

The Lord can make it seem as if the enemy should win, and yet vanquish him. If we have faith, we have God with us, and what are multitudes of men? One shepherd's dog can drive before him a flock of sheep. If the Lord sent you, O my brother, His strength will accomplish His divine purpose. Therefore, rely on the promise, and be very courageous.

May 25

God's Treasury

The Lord will open for you His good storehouse. (Deuteronomy 28:12)

*T*his refers first to the rain. The Lord will give this in its season. Rain is the emblem of all those heavenly times of refreshing that the Lord is ready to give to His people. Oh, for a profuse shower to refresh the Lord's heritage!

We seem to think that God's treasury can only be opened by a great prophet like Elijah, but this is not so, for this promise is to all the faithful in Israel, and is indeed to each one of them. O believing friend, *the Lord will open for you His good storehouse*. You, too, can see heaven opened and can thrust in your hand and take out your portion, along with a portion for all your brethren who are around you. Ask whatever you will, and you will not be denied if you abide in Christ and His words abide in you.

As yet you have not known all your Lord's treasures, but He will open them up to your understanding. Certainly you have not yet enjoyed the fullness of His covenant riches, but He will direct your heart into His love and reveal Jesus in you. Only the Lord Himself can do this for you, but this is His promise, and if you will listen diligently to His voice and obey His will, His riches in glory by Christ Jesus will be yours.

May 26

Commonest Things Blessed

*You will serve the Lord your God, and He will bless
your bread and your water. (Exodus 23:25)*

What a promise this is! To serve God is in itself a great delight, but what an added privilege to have the blessing of the Lord resting upon us in all things! Our commonest things become blessed when we ourselves are consecrated to the Lord. Our Lord Jesus took bread and blessed it, and we also eat of blessed bread. Jesus blessed water and made it wine, and the water that we drink is far better to us than any of the wine with which men make merry; every drop has a benediction in it. The divine blessing is on the man of God in everything, and it will abide with him at all times.

So what if we only have bread and water – it is blessed bread and water. Bread and water we will have. That is implied, for it must be there for God to bless it. His bread will be given him, his water will be sure (Isaiah 33:16). With God at our table, we not only ask a blessing, but we have one. It is not only at the altar, but at the table that He blesses us. He serves those well who serve Him well. This table blessing is not of debt, but of grace. Indeed, there is a triple grace: He grants us grace to serve Him, by His grace He feeds us with bread, and then in His grace He blesses it.

May 27

As the Life – So the Fruit

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8)

*I*f we desire to glorify our Lord by fruitfulness, we must have certain things within us, for nothing can come out of us that is not first of all within us. We must begin with faith, which is the groundwork of all the virtues. Then we must diligently add to it virtue, knowledge, temperance, and patience, and with these we must have godliness and brotherly love (2 Peter 1:5-7). All these put together will most assuredly cause us to produce, as our life fruit, the clusters of usefulness, and we will therefore not be mere idle knowers, but real doers of the Word (James 1:22). These holy things must not only be in us, but they must abound, or we will be barren. Fruit is the overflow of life, and we must be full before we can flow over.

We have noticed people of considerable positions and opportunities who have never succeeded in doing real good in the conversion of souls, and after close observation, we have concluded that they lacked certain graces that are absolutely essential to bearing fruit. For real usefulness, graces are better than gifts. As the man is, so is his work. If we want to do better, we must be better. Let the text be a gentle hint to unfruitful professors of Christianity, as well as to myself.

May 28

Remind God of His Promise

For You said, "I will surely prosper you." (Genesis 32:12)

*T*his is the certain way of prevailing with the Lord in prayer. We can humbly remind Him of what He has said. Our faithful God will never turn back from His word, nor will He leave it unfulfilled, yet He loves to be inquired of by His people and told of His promise. This is refreshing to their memories, reviving to their faith, and renewing to their hope. God's Word is not given for His sake, but for ours. His purposes are settled, and He needs nothing to hold Him to His purpose of doing His people good, but He gives the promise for our strengthening and comfort. Therefore He wants us to plead it and say to Him, *You said*.

I will surely prosper you, or "I will surely do good to you," is the center of all the Lord's gracious sayings. Put special emphasis on the word *surely*. He will do us good, real good, tasting good, only good, every good. He will make us good, and this is to do us good in the very highest degree. He will treat us as He does His saints while we are here, and that is good. He will soon take us to be with Jesus and all His chosen, and that is supremely good. With this promise in our hearts, we do not need to fear angry Esau or anyone else. If the Lord will do us good, who can do us harm?

May 29

Fishermen Follow Him

Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (Mark 1:17)


Only by following Jesus can we obtain our heart's desire and be really useful to our fellow human beings. Oh, how we long to be successful fishermen for Jesus! We would sacrifice our lives to win souls, but we are tempted to try methods that Jesus would never have tried. Will we yield to the suggestion of the enemy? If so, we might splash the water, but we will never catch the fish. We must follow Jesus if we want to have success in this. Sensational methods, entertainment, and so forth – are these following Jesus? Can we imagine the Lord Jesus drawing a congregation by such means as are now commonly used? What is the result of such methods? The result is nothing that Jesus will add up at the last great day.

We must keep to our preaching as our Master did, for by this means souls are saved. We must preach our Lord's doctrine and proclaim a full and free gospel, for this is the net in which souls are taken. We must preach with His gentleness, boldness, and love, for this is the secret of success with human hearts. We must work under divine anointing, depending upon the sacred Spirit. In this way, following after Jesus and not running before Him nor apart from Him, we will be fishers of men.

May 30

Holy Foresight

Nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven. (Matthew 26:64)

h, Lord, You were in Your lowest state when You were made to stand like a criminal before Your persecutors! Yet the eyes of Your faith could see beyond Your present humiliation into Your future glory. What words these are: *Nevertheless . . . hereafter!* I want to imitate Your holy foresight, and in the midst of poverty, sickness, or slander, I also want to say, *Nevertheless . . . hereafter.* Instead of weakness, You have all power. Instead of shame, You have all glory. Instead of derision, You have all worship, Your cross has not dimmed the splendor of Your crown, neither has the spit marred the beauty of Your face. Rather, You are even more exalted and honored because of Your sufferings.

So, Lord, I also want to take courage from the *hereafter.* I want to forget the present tribulation in the future triumph. Help me by directing me into Your Father's love and into Your own patience, so that when I am ridiculed for Your name I will not waver, but will think more and more of the hereafter, and therefore, all the less of today. I will be with You soon and will behold Your glory. Therefore, I am not ashamed, but I say in my inmost soul, *Nevertheless . . . hereafter.*

May 31

Take Courage

*In the world you have tribulation, but take courage;
I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)*

My Lord's words are true as to the tribulation. I have my share of it beyond all doubt. The threshing stick is not hung up out of the way, nor can I hope that it will be set aside as long as I lie upon the threshing floor. How can I expect to be at home in the enemy's country, joyful while in exile, or comfortable in a wilderness? This is not my rest. This is the place of the furnace, the forge, and the hammer. My experience matches with my Lord's words.

I see that He tells me to take courage. I am much too inclined to be downcast. My spirit soon sinks when I face trials and tribulations, but I must not give way to this feeling. When my Lord tells me to cheer up and take courage, I must not dare to be cast down.

What is the argument that Jesus uses to encourage me? It is His own victory. He says, I have overcome the world. His battle was much more severe than mine. I have not yet resisted unto blood. Why do I despair that I might not overcome? The enemy has already been overcome. I fight against a defeated foe. O world, Jesus has already conquered you, and in me, by His grace, He will overcome you again. Therefore, I am encouraged and courageous, and I sing unto my conquering Lord.

June

June 1

God's Promise Keeps

*Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you
will find it after many days. (Ecclesiastes 11:1)*

We must not expect to see an immediate reward for all the good we do, nor must we always confine our efforts to places and people that seem likely to reward us for our labors. The Egyptian casts his seed upon the waters of the Nile where it might seem to be a sheer waste of corn, but in due time the flood subsides, the rice or other grain sinks into the fertile mud, and a harvest is rapidly produced. Let us do good today to those who are unthankful and evil. Let us teach the careless and the rebellious. Unlikely waters may cover hopeful soil. Nowhere will our labor be in vain in the Lord.

It is our responsibility to cast our bread upon the waters; it is up to God to fulfill the promise of *You will find it*. He will not let His promise fail. His good word that we have spoken will live, will be found, and will be found by us. It might not be just yet, but some day we will reap what we have sown. We must exercise our patience, or maybe the Lord will exercise it. *After many days*, says the Scripture, and in many instances those days run into months and years, and yet the Word stands true. God's promise will keep; let us make sure that we obey this command today and every day.

June 2

Immediate Freedom

*Now, I will break his yoke bar from upon you, and
I will tear off your shackles. (Nahum 1:13)*

The Assyrians were allowed to oppress the Lord's people for a season, but there came a time for their power to be broken. In the same way, many hearts are held in bondage by Satan and are severely troubled under the yoke. Oh, that to such prisoners of hope the word of the Lord may come at once, according to the text: Now, I will break his yoke bar from upon you, and I will tear off your shackles.

See! The Lord promises a present deliverance: Now, I will break his yoke bar from upon you. Believe for immediate freedom, and according to your faith so it will be unto you at this very hour. When God says "now," let no one say "tomorrow."

See how complete the rescue is to be. The yoke is not to be removed, but broken; the shackles are not to be loosened, but torn off. This is a display of divine force that guarantees that the oppressor will not return. His yoke is broken, and we cannot again be bowed down by its weight. His shackles are torn off and can no longer hold us. Oh, to believe in Jesus for complete and everlasting emancipation! If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed (John 8:36).

*Come, Lord, and set Your captives
free, according to Your Word.*

June 3

Surefootedness

*The Lord God is my strength, and He has made
my feet like hinds' feet, and makes me walk
on my high places. (Habakkuk 3:19)*

This confidence of the man of God is equivalent to a promise, for that which faith is convinced of is the purpose of God. The prophet had to travel through the deep places of poverty and famine, but he went downhill without slipping, for the Lord steadied his feet. Soon he was called to the high places of the hills of conflict, and he was no more afraid to go up than to go down.

Notice that not only did the Lord gave him strength, but God Himself was his strength. Think of that: the almighty God Himself becomes our strength!

Notice that the Lord also gave him surefootedness. The deer leap over rock and ridge, never missing their footholds. Our Lord will give us grace to follow the most difficult paths of duty without stumbling. He can prepare our feet for the rocks and ridges so that we will be at home, while if we were apart from God, we would perish.

One of these days we will be called to higher places still. Up there we will climb, even to the mount of God, to the high places where the shining ones are gathered. Oh, what feet are the feet of faith, by which, following the deer of the morning, we will ascend into the hill of the Lord (Psalm 24:3)!

June 4

Exceedingly Precious

"They will be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own possession." (Malachi 3:17)

A day is coming in which the crown jewels of our great King will be counted so that it will be seen whether they are consistent with the inventory that His Father gave Him. Will you be among the precious things of Jesus? You are precious to Him if He is precious to you, and you will be His on that day if He is yours on this day.

In the days of Malachi, the chosen of the Lord were accustomed to converse with each other in a way that their God Himself listened to their talk. He liked it so well that He took notes of it; yes, and He made a book of it that He kept in His record office. Pleased with their conversation, He was also pleased with them.

Pause and ask yourself: If Jesus were to listen to what I say, would He be pleased with it? Is it for His glory and to the edification of others? Give an answer, and be sure to speak the truth.

What honor it is for us poor creatures to be considered by the Lord to be His crown jewels! All the saints have this honor. Jesus not only says that they are mine (John 17:10), but also, *They will be mine*. He bought us, sought us, brought us in, and has so much formed us to His image that we will be fought for by Him with all His might.

June 5

Is There a Difference?

But against any of the sons of Israel a dog will not even bark, whether against man or beast, that you may understand how the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. (Exodus 11:7)

*W*hat! God has power over the tongues of dogs? Can He keep ours from barking? Yes, this is true. He can prevent an Egyptian dog from bothering one of the lambs of Israel's flock. If God can silence dogs, in addition to the barking, growling people among us and even the great dog at hell's gate, then let us go on our way without fear.

Even if He lets dogs move their tongues, He can still stop their teeth. They can make a dreadful noise, yet do us no real harm. However, how sweet the quiet is! How delightful to move about among enemies and perceive that God makes them to be at peace with us (Proverbs 16:7)! Like Daniel in the den of lions, we are unhurt amid those who could destroy us.

May this word of the Lord to Israel be true to me today! Does the dog worry me? I will tell my Lord about him.

Lord, he does not care what I have to say, but if You speak the word of power, he must lie down. Give me peace, O my God, and let me see Your hand so clearly in it that I can easily see the difference that Your grace has made between me and the ungodly!

June 6

He Always Listens

*The Lord has heard my supplication, the
Lord receives my prayer. (Psalm 6:9)*

*T*his verse has been proven true in my own experience. I can personally affirm that God is true. He has answered the prayers of His servant many, many times in very wonderful ways. Yes, and He is hearing my present supplication. He is not turning away His ear from me. Blessed be His holy name!

It is certain that the promise that lies sleeping in the psalmist's believing confidence is also mine. Let me grasp it by the hand of faith: *The Lord receives my prayer.* He will accept it, think of it, and grant it in the way and time that His loving wisdom judges to be best. I bring my poor prayer in my hand to the great King, and He gives me audience and graciously receives my petition. My enemies will not listen to me, but my Lord will. They ridicule my tearful prayers, but my Lord does not. He receives my prayer into His ear and His heart.

What a reception this is for a poor sinner! We receive Jesus, and then the Lord receives us and our prayers for His Son's sake. Blessed be that dear name that enables our prayers to freely pass within the golden gates.

Lord, teach me to pray since You hear my prayers.

June 7

The Safest Place

I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:28)

We believe in the eternal security of the saints. First, we believe this because they are Christ's, and He will never lose the sheep that He has bought with His blood and received from His Father.

Next, we believe in the eternal security of the saints because God gives them eternal life – and if it is eternal, then it is eternal, and there can be no end to hell and heaven and God. If spiritual life can die out, it is clearly not eternal life. Eternal life completely shuts out the possibility of there being an end to that life.

Observe, further, that the Lord specifically says, *They will never perish*. As long as words have a meaning, this secures believers from perishing. The most obstinate unbelief cannot force this meaning out of this sentence.

Then, to make the matter complete, Jesus declares that His people are in His hand, and He defies all their enemies to pluck them out of it. Surely that is impossible, even for the demons of hell. We are safe in the grasp of an almighty Savior. Let us, then, dismiss worldly fear as well as human confidence, and let us rest peacefully in the hollow of the Redeemer's hand.

June 8

Wisdom for the Asking

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God,
who gives to all generously and without reproach,
and it will be given to him. (James 1:5)*

If any of you lacks wisdom. There is no if in the matter, for I am sure I lack it. What do I know? How can I guide my own way? How can I direct others? Lord, I am a mass of foolishness, and I have no wisdom.

Let him ask of God. Lord, I now ask. Here at Your footstool, I ask to be furnished with heavenly wisdom for this day's perplexities, and also for this day's simplicities, for I know I might do some very stupid things, even in simple matters, unless You keep me out of trouble.

I thank You that all I have to do is to ask. What grace this is on Your part, that I only have to pray in faith, and You will give me wisdom! You promise me a generous education in this verse, and that, too, without an angry tutor or a scolding teacher. This, too, You will give freely, even to a fool who lacks wisdom. O Lord, I thank You for that positive and expressive word, *It will be given to him*. I believe it. This very day You will make Your child to know the hidden wisdom that the worldly-wise never learn. You will guide me with Your counsel and will afterward receive me to glory.

June 9

A Trustworthy Name

I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of the Lord. (Zephaniah 3:12)

When true Christianity is ready to die out among the wealthy, it finds a home among the poor of this world who are rich in faith. Even now, the Lord has His faithful remnant. Am I one of them?

Maybe it is because people are afflicted and poor that they learn to trust in the name of the Lord. He who has no money must try what he can do on trust. He whose own name is good for nothing in his own esteem acts wisely to rest in another name, even that best of names, the name of The Lord. God will always have a trusting people, and these will be an afflicted and poor people. Even though the world thinks little of them, their being left in the midst of a nation is the channel of untold blessings to the world, for in them we have the conserving salt that keeps in check the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:4).

Again the questions come home to each one of us: Am I one of them? Am I afflicted by the sin within me and around me? Am I poor in spirit? Am I poor spiritually in my own judgment? Do I trust in the Lord? This is the main business. Jesus reveals the name, the character, and the person of God. Am I trusting in Him? If so, I am left in this world for a purpose.

Lord, help me to fulfill it.

June 10

A Shepherd Secures Them

*They will feed and lie down with no one to
make them tremble. (Zephaniah 3:13)*

Yesterday we thought of the afflicted and poor people whom the Lord left to be a living seed in a dead world. The prophet says of such people that they will not work iniquity nor speak lies (Zephaniah 3:13). So while they had neither power nor riches to guard them, they were also quite unable to use those weapons in which the wicked place so much reliance, for they could not defend themselves by sin or by deceit.

What will happen to them then? Will they be destroyed? By no means! They will both feed and rest. They will not just be free from danger, but they will even be calm and quiet from fear of evil. Sheep are very feeble creatures, and wolves are terrible enemies; yet the cause of the sheep is always winning, while the cause of the wolves is always declining. One day, after heaven and earth pass away, flocks of sheep will cover the plains and not a wolf will be left. The fact is that sheep have a Shepherd, and this gives them food, protection, and peace. No one – that means not one, whether in human form or in the form of a devil – will make them tremble. Who will terrify the Lord's flock when He is near? We lie down in green pastures (Psalms 23:2), for Jesus Himself is food and rest to our souls.

June 11

No Reason to Be Ashamed

Fear not, for you will not be put to shame. (Isaiah 54:4)

We will not be ashamed of our faith. Petty critics may attack the Scriptures upon which we base our belief, but every year the Lord will make it more and more clear that in His Book there is no error, no excess, and no omission. It is no discredit to be a simple believer. The faith that looks to Jesus alone is a crown of honor on anyone's head, and it is better than a star on his chest.

We will not be ashamed of our hope. It will be just as the Lord has said. We will be fed, led, blessed, and rested. Our Lord will come, and then the days of our mourning will be over. How we will glory in the Lord, who first gave us a living hope, and then gave us that which we hoped for!

We will not be ashamed of our love. Jesus is to us altogether lovely (Song of Solomon 5:16), and we will never, never need to be ashamed because we have surrendered our hearts to Him. The sight of our glorious Well-beloved will justify the most enthusiastic attachment to Him (Isaiah 5:1). No one will blame the martyrs for dying for Him. When the enemies of Christ are clothed with everlasting contempt, those who love Jesus will find themselves honored by all holy beings because they chose the reproach of Christ rather than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews 11:26).

June 12

Dwelling Safely Apart

*Israel dwells in security, the fountain of Jacob
secluded, in a land of grain and new wine; His heavens
also drop down dew. (Deuteronomy 33:28)*

*T*he more we dwell alone, the more safe we will be. God wants His people to be separate from sinners. His call to them is, *Come out from their midst and be separate* (2 Corinthians 6:17). A Christian world is a monstrosity that the Scriptures never consider. A worldly Christian is spiritually diseased. Those who compromise with Christ's enemies can be considered as being with them.

Our safety does not lie in agreeing with the enemy, but in dwelling alone with our Best Friend. If we do this, we will dwell in safety despite the ridicule, slanders, and sneers of the world. We will be safe from the harmful influence of its unbelief, pride, vanity, and filthiness.

God will also make us dwell in safety alone in that day when sin will be visited on the nations by wars and famines. The Lord brought Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, but Abram stopped halfway. He had no blessing until, having set out to go to the land of Canaan, to the land of Canaan he came. He was safe alone, even in the midst of foes. Lot was not safe in Sodom even though he was in a circle of friends. Our safety is in dwelling apart with God.

June 13

Divine Cultivation

I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. (Isaiah 27:3, KJV)

When the Lord Himself speaks in His own person rather than through a prophet, the word has a special weight to believing minds. It is The Lord Himself who is the keeper of His own vineyard. He does not trust it to anyone else, but He makes it His own personal care. Are they not well kept whom God Himself keeps?

We are to receive gracious watering, not only every day and every hour, but *every moment*. How we should grow! How fresh and fruitful every plant should be! What rich clusters the vines should bear!

But the plants are sometimes disturbed by little foxes (Song of Solomon 2:15) and the boar (Psalm 80:13). Therefore, the Lord Himself guards us, and does so at all hours, both *night and day*. What, then, can harm us? Why are we afraid! He tends, He waters, and He guards. What more do we need?

Twice in this verse the Lord says, I will. What truth, what power, what love, what immutability we find in the great I will of God! Who can resist His will? If He says I will, what room is there for doubt? With an I will of God, we can face all the hosts of sin, death, and hell.

O Lord, since You say that You will keep us, I reply, "I will praise You!"

June 14

He Constantly Abides

For the Lord will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the Lord has been pleased to make you a people for Himself. (1 Samuel 12:22)

God's choice of His people is the reason for His abiding by them and not forsaking them. He chose them for His love, and He loves them for His choice. His own good pleasure is the source of their election, and His election is the reason for His continued pleasure in them. It would dishonor His great name for Him to forsake them since it would either show that He made an error in His choice or that He was inconstant in His love. God's love has this glory, that it never changes, and He will never tarnish this glory.

By all the memories of the Lord's former mercies, let us rest assured that He will not forsake us. He who has gone so far as to make us His people will not undo the creation of His grace. He has not worked such wonders for us so that He would leave us later. His Son, Jesus, has died for us, and we can be sure that He has not died in vain. Can He forsake those for whom He shed His blood? Because He has previously taken pleasure in choosing and in saving us, it will be His pleasure still to bless us. The love of our Lord Jesus does not change. Having loved His own, He loves them to the end (John 13:1).

June 15

Home Blessings Extended

*The Lord bless you from Zion, and may
you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the
days of your life. (Psalm 128:5)*

*T*his is a promise to the God-fearing person who sincerely and earnestly walks in the ways of holiness. He will be blessed in his family life; his wife and children will be a source of great home happiness. As a member of the church, he desires to see the cause prosper, for he is as much concerned for the Lord's house as for his own. When the Lord builds our house, it is only right that we would desire to see the Lord's house built. Our goods are not truly good unless we use them to promote the good of the Lord's chosen church.

Yes, you will get a blessing when you go up to the assemblies of Zion; you will be instructed, enlivened, and comforted where prayer and praise ascend and testimony is carried to the great Sacrifice. The Lord bless you from Zion.

You will not be the only one who benefits, for the church itself will prosper. Believers will be multiplied, and their holy work will be crowned with success. Certain gracious people have this promise fulfilled to them as long as they live, but when they die, the cause often languishes. Let us be among those who bring good things to Jerusalem all their days.

Lord, in Your mercy, make us such people! Amen.

June 16

Possess, Not Only Profess

*For whoever has, to him more will be given, and
he will have an abundance. (Matthew 13:12)*

*W*hen the Lord has given someone much grace, He will give him more. A little faith is a nest egg; more faith will come to it. However, it must not be only professed faith, but it must be real and true. What a necessity is laid upon us to make definite work in Christianity, and not just to profess much while possessing nothing! One of these days, the very profession will be taken from us, if that is all we have. The threatening is as true as the promise.

Blessed be the Lord, for when He once begins to bestow the graces of His Spirit, it is His way to cause him who only had a little, and yet who genuinely had that little, to have abundance. Oh, for that abundance! Abundance of grace is something to be coveted. It is good to know much, but it is even better to love much. It would be delightful to have much skill in order to serve God, but it is better still to have abundance of faith in order to trust in the Lord for skill and for everything else.

*Lord, since You have given me a sense of sin, please
deepen my hatred of evil. Since You have caused
me to trust Jesus, raise my faith to full assurance.
Since You have made me to love You, cause me to
be carried away with fervent affection for You!*

June 17

Our Field of Battle

*For the Lord your God is the one who goes
with you, to fight for you against your enemies,
to save you. (Deuteronomy 20:4)*

We have no enemies except the enemies of God. Our fights are not against people, but against spiritual wickedness. We war against the devil and the blasphemy, error, and despair that he brings into the field of battle. We fight against all the armies of sin – impurity, drunkenness, oppression, infidelity, and ungodliness. We fight against these things earnestly, but not with sword or spear; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

Our God hates everything that is evil, and therefore He goes with us to fight for us in this crusade. He will save us, and He will give us grace to fight a good fight and win the victory. We can depend upon it that if we are on God's side, God is on our side. With such an imposing ally, the conflict is never in the least degree doubtful. It is not that truth is mighty and must prevail, but it is that power and strength are with the Father, who is almighty; with Jesus, who has all power in heaven and in earth; and with the Holy Spirit, who works His will among men.

Soldiers of Christ, gird on your armor. Set out in the name of the God of holiness, and by faith grasp His salvation. Do not let this day pass without striking a blow for Jesus and holiness.

June 18

God Himself Will Work

"Now I will arise," says the Lord, "now I will be exalted, now I will be lifted up." (Isaiah 33:10)

*W*hen the land had been spoiled as waste as if devoured by locusts, and the warriors who had defended the country sat down and wept like women, then the Lord came to the rescue. When travelers ceased using the roads to Zion, and Bashan and Carmel were as vineyards from which the fruit had failed, then the Lord arose. God is exalted in the midst of an afflicted people, for they seek His face and trust Him. He is still more exalted when, in answer to their cries, He rises up to deliver them and overthrow their enemies.

Is it a day of sorrow with us? Let us expect to see the Lord glorified in our deliverance. Are we drawn out in fervent prayer? Do we cry day and night unto Him? Then the set time for His grace is near. God will lift Himself up at the right season. He will arise when it will be most for the display of His glory. We desire His glory more than we long for our own deliverance. If the Lord is exalted, then our greatest desire is obtained.

Lord, help us in such a way that we can see that You are working. May we magnify You in our inmost souls. Make everyone around us see how good and great a God You are.

June 19

A Sound Heart

*May my heart be blameless in Your statutes, so
that I will not be ashamed. (Psalm 119:80)*

We can regard this inspired prayer as containing within itself the assurance that those who keep close to the Word of God will never have a reason to be ashamed for doing so.

The prayer is for soundness of heart. A sound set of beliefs is good, a sound judgment concerning it is better, but a sound heart toward the truth is best of all. We must love the truth, feel the truth, and obey the truth; otherwise, we are not truly sound in God's statutes. Are there many people in these evil days who are sound? Oh, that we will be this kind of people!

Many will be ashamed in the last great day, when all disputes will be decided. Then they will see the foolishness of their ways and will be filled with remorse because of their proud unbelief and willful defiance of the Lord; but he who believed what the Lord taught and who did what the Lord commanded will stand forth justified in what he did. *Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun* (Matthew 13:43). Those who have been much slandered and abused for following Christ Jesus will find their shame turned into glory in that day.

Let us pray the prayer of our text, and we can be sure that its promise will be fulfilled to us. If the Lord makes us blameless, He will keep us safe.

June 20

The Lord Our Companion

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)

These are sweet words in describing a deathbed assurance. How many have repeated them in their last hours with intense delight! But the verse is equally applicable to anguish of spirit in the midst of life. Some of us, like Paul (1 Corinthians 15:31), die daily through a tendency to despair of soul. John Bunyan puts the Valley of the Shadow of Death far earlier in the pilgrimage than the river that rolls at the foot of the celestial hills.⁷

Some of us have traveled the dark and dreadful *valley of the shadow of death* several times, and we can bear witness that the Lord alone enabled us to endure amid its wild designs, its mysterious horrors, and its terrible depressions. The Lord has sustained us and kept us above all real fear of evil, even when our spirit has been overwhelmed. We have been pressed and oppressed, yet we have lived, for we have felt the presence of the Great Shepherd and have been confident that His shepherd's staff would prevent the enemy from inflicting upon us any deadly wound.

If the present time is darkened by the black wings of a great sorrow, let us glorify God by peacefully trusting in Him.

⁷ This is from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, available from Aneko Press.

June 21

A Woman's War

*The Lord will sell Sisera into the hands
of a woman. (Judges 4:9)*

This is rather an unusual text, but there may be people in the world who have faith enough to grasp it. Barak was called to the war, but he had little stomach for the fight unless Deborah would go with him – so the Lord determined to make it a woman's war. By this means, He rebuked the negligence of the man, gained for Himself more eminence, and cast more shame upon the enemies of His people.

The Lord can still use weak instruments. Why not me? He can use people who are not usually called to big public engagements. Why not you? The woman who slew the enemy of Israel was no giant, but was a wife who stayed in her tent. She was not an orator, but a woman who milked the cows and made butter. Cannot the Lord use any of us to accomplish His purpose? Somebody might come to the house today, just as Sisera went to Jael's tent.

Let it not be our duty to slay him, but to save him. Let us receive him with much kindness and then bring forth the blessed truth of salvation by the Lord Jesus, our great Substitute, pressing home the command, "Believe and live" (John 11:25) Who knows whether some hard-hearted sinner might be slain by the gospel today!

June 22

He with Us; We with Him

The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be shortened. (Proverbs 10:27)

There is no doubt about it. The fear of the Lord leads to upright habits, and these prevent that waste of life that comes by way of sin and doing what is wrong. The holy rest that springs out of faith in the Lord Jesus also greatly helps a person when he is sick. Every physician rejoices to have a patient whose mind is fully at ease. Worry kills, but confidence in God is like healing medicine.

We have, therefore, all the arrangements for long life, and if it is really for our good, we will see a good old age and come to our graves as shocks of corn in their season. Let us not be overcome with a sudden expectation of death the moment we have an ache in our finger, but let us rather expect that we may have to continue working for a considerable length of days.


And what if we would soon be called to the higher realm? Certainly there would be nothing to denounce in such a summons, but everything to rejoice in. Living or dying, *we are the Lord's* (Romans 14:8). If we live, Jesus will be with us; if we die, we will be with Jesus.

The truest lengthening of life is to live while we live, wasting no time, but using every hour for the highest purposes. May it be so today.

June 23

The Enemy Frustrated

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, "He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield or throw up a siege ramp against it." (2 Kings 19:32)

 God said, Sennacherib did not molest the city. He had boasted loudly, but he could not carry out his threats. The Lord is able to stop the enemies of His people in the very act. When the lion has the lamb between his jaws, the great Shepherd of the sheep can rob him of his prey. Our distress only provides an opportunity for a greater display of divine power and wisdom.

In the case before us, the dreadful enemy did not put in an appearance before the city that he wanted to destroy. He could not shoot any harmful arrows over the walls, he could not batter down the walls, and he could not build mounds of earth to shut in the inhabitants. It may be in our case, also, that the Lord will prevent our adversaries from doing us any harm. Certainly He can change their intentions or render their plans so unsuccessful that they will gladly abandon them. Let us trust in the Lord and keep His way, and He will take care of us. Yes, He will fill us with admiring praise as we see the perfection of His deliverance.

Let us not fear the enemy until he actually comes, and then let us trust in the Lord.

June 24

The Lord's Much More

Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?" And the man of God answered, "The Lord has much more to give you than this." (2 Chronicles 25:9)

If you have made a mistake, bear the loss of it, but do not act contrary to the will of the Lord. The Lord can give you much more than you are likely to lose, and if He does not, will you begin bargaining and haggling with God? The king of Judah had hired an army from idolatrous Israel, and he was commanded to send the fighting men home because the Lord was not with them. He was willing to send away the army of men, but he was not happy about paying the hundred talents for nothing. Oh, for shame! If the Lord will give the victory without the hired men, surely it was a good bargain to pay their wages and be done with them.

Be willing to lose money for the sake of conscience, for the sake of peace, and for the sake of Christ. Rest assured that losses for the Lord are not losses. Even in this life, they are more than made up for. In some cases, the Lord prevents any loss from happening. As to our immortal life, what we lose for Jesus is invested in heaven. Do not worry at apparent disaster, but listen to the whisper, *The Lord has much more to give you than this.*

June 25

A Staircase to Heaven

He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (John 1:51)

Yes, even today, this sight is plain to our faith. We do see heaven opened. Jesus Himself has opened that kingdom to all believers. We gaze into the place of mystery and glory, for He has revealed it to us. We will enter it soon, for He is the way.

Now we see the explanation of Jacob's ladder. Between earth and heaven there is holy business; prayer ascends, and answers come down by the way of Jesus, the Mediator. We see this ladder when we see our Lord. In Him a stairway of light now furnishes a clear path to the throne of the Most High. Let us use it and send up by it the messengers of our prayers. We will live the angelic life ourselves if we run up to heaven in intercession, lay hold upon the blessings of the covenant, and then descend again to scatter those gifts among the children of men.

This fine sight that Jacob only saw in a dream will turn into a bright reality. This very day we will be up and down the ladder every hour, climbing in communion and coming down in labor to save all those around us.

*This is Your promise, O Lord Jesus;
let us joyfully see it fulfilled.*

June 26

It Will Not Be Long

*You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for
the coming of the Lord is near. (James 5:8)*

*T*he last verse in the Song of Solomon says, *Hurry, my beloved* (Song of Solomon 8:14), and among the last words of the book of Revelation we read, *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come"* (Revelation 22:17), to which the heavenly Bridegroom answers, *Yes, I am coming quickly* (Revelation 22:20). Love longs for the glorious appearing of the Lord, and it enjoys this sweet promise: *the coming of the Lord is near*. This quiets our minds as to the future. We look out with hope through this window.

This sacred window of agate (Isaiah 54:12) lets in a flood of light upon the present and puts us into fine condition for immediate work or suffering. Are we tired? Then the nearness of our joy whispers patience. Are we growing weary because we do not see the harvest of our seed-sowing? Again this glorious truth cries to us, *Be patient*. Do our multiplied temptations cause us in the least to waver? Then the assurance that before long the Lord will be here preaches to us from this text, *Strengthen your hearts*. Be firm, be stable, be constant, *be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord* (1 Corinthians 15:58). Soon you will hear the silver trumpet that announces the coming of your King. Be not afraid in the least. Hold the fort, for He is coming. Yes, He might appear this very day.

June 27

Thank Him; Dwell Acceptably

Surely the righteous will give thanks to Your name; the upright will dwell in Your presence. (Psalm 140:13)

*O*n, that my heart may be upright, that I may always be able to bless the name of the Lord! He is so good to those who are good, that I would gladly be among them and feel myself full of thankfulness every day. Perhaps, for a moment, the righteous stumble when their integrity results in severe trial, but the day will certainly come when they will bless their God that they did not give in to evil suggestions and adopt an underhanded policy. In the long run, true men will thank the God of the right for leading them in a right way. Oh, that I may be among them!

What a promise is implied in this second clause: *The upright will dwell in Your presence*. They will stand accepted where others appear only to be condemned. They will be the attendants of the great King, indulged with standing in His presence whenever they desire it. They will be favored ones upon whom The Lord smiles and with whom He graciously communes.

Lord, I covet this high honor, this precious privilege. It will be heaven on earth to me to enjoy it. Make me in all things upright so that today and tomorrow and every day I can stand in Your heavenly presence. Then I will give thanks unto Your name forevermore. Amen.

June 28

One Look from the Lord!

The Lord looked at him and said, "Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian. Have I not sent you?" (Judges 6:14)

What a look that was that the Lord gave to Gideon! He looked him right out of his discouragement and into a holy bravery. If our look to the Lord saves us, what will His look at us not do? Lord, look on me this day and strengthen me for its duties and conflicts.

What a word this was that The Lord spoke to Gideon! Go. He must not hesitate. He could have answered, "What, go in all this weakness?" But the Lord quickly dismissed that word by saying, *Go in this your strength.* The Lord had promised strength for him, and he had nothing to do now but to go by faith and save Israel by defeating the Midianites.

It may be that the Lord has more to do by me than I ever dreamed of. If He has looked upon me, He has made me strong. Let me by faith exercise the power that He has entrusted me with. He never tells me to waste away my time in my own strength. Far from it. I must go because He strengthens me. What a question that is that the Lord asks me, just as He asked Gideon! Have I not sent you?

*Yes, Lord, You have sent me, and I will go in Your strength. At Your command I go, and in going,
I am assured that You will conquer by me.*

June 29

Invitation to Pray

Call to Me and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know. (Jeremiah 33:3)

God encourages us to pray. Some people say that prayer is a religious exercise that has no influence except upon the mind engaged in prayer. We know better. Our experience gives the lie a thousand times over to this assertion of unbelief. In this verse the living God distinctly promises to answer the prayer of His servant. Let us call upon Him again and have no doubt about whether or not He will hear us and answer us. He who made the ear, will He not hear (Psalm 94:9)? He who gave parents a love for their children, will He not listen to the cries of His own sons and daughters?

God will answer His pleading people in their anguish. He has wonders in store for them. He will do for them what they have never seen, heard of, or dreamed of. He will invent new blessings, if needful. He will ransack sea and land to feed them. He will send every angel out of heaven to help them if their distress requires it. He will amaze us with His grace and make us feel that it was never before done in this manner. All He asks of us is that we will call upon Him. He cannot ask less of us. Let us cheerfully give Him our prayers at once.

June 30

Back, Then Forward

Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. (Ezekiel 16:60)

Despite our sins, the Lord is still faithful in His love to us. He looks back. See how He remembers those early days of ours when He took us into covenant with Himself, and we gave ourselves over to Him. Those were happy days! The Lord does not taunt us with them and accuse us of being insincere. No, He looks instead to His covenant with us rather than to our covenant with Him. There was no hypocrisy in that sacred compact, on His part, at any rate. How gracious is the Lord to look back in love!

He looks forward also. He is resolved that the covenant will not fail. If we do not do our part, He still does His. He solemnly declares, *I will establish an everlasting covenant with you*. He has no desire to back away from His promises. Blessed be His name – He sees the sacred seal, *the blood of the eternal covenant* (Hebrews 13:20), and He remembers our Guarantee in whom He ratified that covenant, even His own dear Son. Therefore, He rests in His covenant agreements. *He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself* (2 Timothy 2:13).

*O Lord, lay this precious word upon my heart,
and help me to feed upon it all day!*

July

July 1

God with Us

God will be with you. (Genesis 48:21)

Good old Jacob could be with Joseph no more, for his hour had come to die; but he left his son without anxiety, for he said with confidence, *God will be with you*. When our dearest relations or our most helpful friends are called home by death, we must comfort ourselves with the thought that the Lord has not departed from us, but He lives for us and abides with us forever.

If God is with us, we are in distinguished company, even though we are poor and despised. If God is with us, we have all-sufficient strength, for nothing can be too hard for the Lord. If God is with us, we are always safe, for no one can harm those who walk under His shadow. Oh, what a joy we have here! Not only is God with us, but He will be with us. He will be with us as individuals, He will be with us as families, and He will be with us as churches. Is not the very name of Jesus – Immanuel – “God with us”? Is not this the best of all, that God is with us? Let us be bravely diligent and joyously hopeful. Our cause must prosper and the truth must win, for the Lord is with those who are with Him. May this sweet word be enjoyed all day long by every believer who turns to “faith’s checkbook.” No greater happiness is possible.

July 2

Refreshing Sleep

So he giveth his beloved sleep. (Psalm 127:2 KJV)

Our life is not a life of anxious care, but of faith. Our heavenly Father will supply the needs of His own children, and He knows what we have need of before we ask Him (Matthew 6:8). We can therefore go to our beds at the proper hour and not wear ourselves out by sitting up late to plot, plan, and contrive. If we have learned to rely upon our God, we will not lie awake with fear gnawing at our hearts, but we will leave our care with the Lord. Our meditation of Him will be sweet, and He will give us refreshing sleep.

To be the Lord's beloved is the highest possible honor, and he who has it may feel that ambition itself could desire no more, and therefore every selfish wish can go to sleep. What more is there, even in heaven, than the love of God? Rest, then, O soul, for you have all things. Yet we will toss back and forth unless the Lord Himself gives us not only the reasons for rest, but rest itself. Yes, He does this. Jesus Himself is our peace, our rest, and our all. We rest in Him in perfect security, both in life and in death.

Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,
I lay me down to rest
As in the embraces of my God,
Or on my Saviour's breast.⁸

⁸ A stanza of a hymn by Isaac Watts.

July 3

A Guide All the Way

He will guide us until death. (Psalm 48:14)

We need a guide. Sometimes we would give all that we have to be told exactly what to do and where to turn. We are willing to do what is right, but we do not know which one of two roads we are to follow. Oh, for a guide!

The Lord our God condescends to serve us as guide. He knows the way and will lead us along the right path until we reach our journey's end in peace. Surely we could not desire more infallible direction. Let us place ourselves completely under His guidance, and we will never lose our way. Let us make Him our God, and we will find Him to be our guide. If we follow His law, we will not miss the right road of life, as long as we first learn to lean upon Him in every step that we take.

Our comfort is that as He is our God forever and ever, He will never cease to be with us as our guide. He will lead us until death, and then we will dwell with Him eternally forevermore. This promise of divine guidance involves lifelong security. We receive salvation at once, guidance unto our last hour, and then endless blessedness. Should not each person seek this in youth, rejoice in it in middle life, and rest in it in old age? Let us look up for guidance today before we leave our homes.

July 4

The Word – Necessary Food

Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4)

*I*f God so willed it, we could live without bread, just as Jesus did for forty days – but we could not live without His Word. We were created by that Word, and it is only by that Word that we can be kept alive, for He sustains all things by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3). Bread is a secondary cause, for the Lord Himself is the first source of our sustenance. He can work without the secondary cause as well as with it, and we must not tie Him down to one method of operation. Let us not be too eager to pursue the visible, but let us look to the invisible God. We have heard believers say that in deep poverty, when bread ran short, their appetites became short, too. To others, when common supplies ran out, the Lord has sent in unexpected help.

However, we must have the Word of the Lord. Only with this can we withstand the devil. If this is taken from us, our enemy will have us in his power, for we will soon faint. Our souls need food, and there is none for them outside of the Word of the Lord. All the books and all the preachers in the world cannot furnish us a single meal; it is only the Word from the mouth of God that can fill the mouth of a believer.

*Lord, give us this bread forevermore. We
value it more than royal delicacies.*

July 5

Complete Deliverance

"But I will deliver you on that day," declares the Lord, "and you will not be given into the hand of the men whom you dread." (Jeremiah 39:17)


When the Lord's faithful ones are suffering for Him, they will have sweet messages of love from Him, and sometimes they will have glad tidings for those who sympathize with them and help them. Ebed-melech was only a despised Ethiopian, but he was kind to Jeremiah, and so the Lord sent him this special promise by the mouth of His prophet. Let us always be mindful of God's persecuted servants, and He will reward us.

Ebed-melech was to be delivered from the men whose vengeance he feared. He was a humble man, but God would take care of him. Thousands were slain by the Chaldeans, but he could not be hurt. We, too, may be fearful of some great ones who are bitter against us, but if we have been faithful to the Lord's cause in the hour of persecution, He will be faithful to us. After all, what can a man do without the Lord's permission? God puts a bit into the mouth of rage and a bridle upon the head of power. Let us fear the Lord, and we will have no one else to fear. No cup of cold water given to a despised prophet of God will be without its reward (Matthew 10:41-42), and if we stand up for Jesus, Jesus will stand up for us.

July 6

His Love, His Gift, and His Son

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

f all the stars in the sky, the North Star is the most useful to the mariner. This text is a North Star, for it has guided more souls to salvation than any other verse of Scripture. It is among promises what the Great Bear, Ursa Major, is among constellations.

Several words in it shine with peculiar brilliance. Here we have God's love with a *so* to it, which marks *how* He loved us. Then we have God's gift in all its freeness and greatness. This also is God's Son, that unique and priceless gift of love that could never fully show itself until heaven's only begotten Son had been sent to live and die for us. These three points are full of light.

Then there is the simple requirement of believing, which graciously points to a way of salvation suitable for all who are guilty. This is backed by a wide description: *whosoever believes in Him*. Many have found room in *whosoever who would have felt themselves shut out by a narrower word*. Then comes the great promise, that believers in Jesus will not perish, but have everlasting life. This is encouraging to everyone who feels that he is ready to perish and that he cannot save himself. We believe in the Lord Jesus, and we have eternal life.

July 7

A Mountain Choir

*Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth!
Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For
the Lord has comforted His people and will have
compassion on His afflicted. (Isaiah 49:13)*

So sweet are the comforts of the Lord that not only the saints themselves sing of them, but even the heavens and the earth take up the song. It takes something to make a mountain sing, and yet the prophet summons quite a choir of them. Lebanon, Sirion, and the high hills of Bashan and Moab – He would set them all singing because of God's grace to His own Zion. May we not also make mountains of difficulty, trial, mystery, and labor become occasions for praise unto our God? *Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains!*

This word of promise, that our God will have mercy upon His afflicted, has a whole choir of bells connected with it. Hear their music: *Shout for joy! Rejoice! Break forth into joyful shouting!* The Lord desires for His people to be happy because of His unfailing love. He does not want us to be sad and doubtful. He claims from us the worship of believing hearts. He cannot fail us. Why should we sigh or mope as if He would do so? Oh, for a well-tuned harp! Oh, for voices like those of the cherubim before the throne!

July 8

An Angel Encampment

*The angel of the Lord encamps around those who
fear Him, and rescues them. (Psalm 34:7)*

We cannot see the angels, but it is enough that they can see us. There is one great Angel of the Covenant, whom not having seen we love (1 Peter 1:8), and His eye is always upon us both day and night. He has a host of holy ones under Him, and He causes them to watch over His saints and to guard them from all harm. If devils do trouble us, the angels are there to help us.

Note that the Lord of angels does not come and go and pay us temporary visits, but He and His armies encamp around us. The headquarters of the army of salvation is where they live whose trust is in the living God. This camp surrounds the faithful so that they cannot be attacked from any side unless the adversary can break through the entrenchments of the Lord of angels. We have a fixed protection, a permanent watch. Guarded by the messengers of God, we will not be surprised by sudden assaults nor swallowed up by overwhelming forces. Deliverance is promised in this verse – deliverance by the great Captain of our salvation, and we will obtain that deliverance again and again until our warfare is accomplished and we exchange the field of conflict for the home of rest.

July 9

Faithful and Useful

My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me. (Psalm 101:6)

*I*f David spoke like this, we can be sure that the Son of David will be of the same mind. Jesus looks out for faithful people, and He focuses His eyes upon them to observe them, to bring them forward, to encourage them, and to reward them. Let no true-hearted person think that he is overlooked; the King Himself has His eye upon him.

There are two results of this royal notice. First, we read, *That they may dwell with me*. Jesus brings the faithful into His house. He sets them in His palace, He makes them His companions, and He delights in their company. We must be faithful to our Lord, and He will then make Himself known to us. When our faithfulness costs us the most, it will be rewarded the best; the more furiously people reject us, the more joyfully will our Lord receive us.

Next, he says of the sincere man, *he will minister to me*. Jesus will use for His own glory those who reject the tricks of policy and are faithful to Himself, His Word, and His cross. These people will be in His royal court, the honored servants of His Majesty. Communion and usefulness are the wages of faithfulness.

Lord, make me faithful that I may dwell with You and serve You.

July 10

Love the Church

You will arise and have compassion on Zion; for it is time to be gracious to her, for the appointed time has come. Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones and feel pity for her dust. (Psalm 102:13-14)

Yes, our prayers for the church will be heard. The set time is come. We love the prayer meetings, the Sunday school, and all the services of the Lord's house. We are bound in heart to all the people of God and can truly say:

There's not a lamb in all Your flock
I would disdain to feed.
There's not a foe before whose face
I'd fear Your cause to plead.⁹

If this is the general feeling, we will soon enjoy times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19). Our assemblies will be filled, saints will be revived, and sinners will be converted. This can only come from the Lord's mercy, but it will come, and we are called upon to expect it. The time, the set time, is come. Let us stir ourselves up. Let us love every stone of our Zion, even though it may be fallen down. Let us treasure up the least truth, the least ordinance, and the least believer, even though some may despise them as only so much dust. When we favor Zion, God is about to favor her. When we take pleasure in the Lord's work, the Lord Himself will take pleasure in it.

9 Philip Doddridge, "Do Not I Love Thee, O My Lord?"

July 11

Never Separated from God

Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this? (John 11:26)

*Y*es, Lord, we believe it. We will never die. Our soul may be separated from our body, and this is a kind of death, but our soul will never be separated from God, which is the true death – the death that was threatened to those who sin – the death penalty that is the worst that can happen. We believe this most confidently, for who will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:39)?

We are members of the body of Christ; will Christ lose parts of His body? We are married to Jesus; will He be bereaved and widowed? It is not possible. There is a life within us that is not capable of being divided from God. Yes, and the Holy Spirit dwells within us; how, then, can we die? Jesus Himself is our life, and therefore there is no dying for us, for He cannot die again. In Him we died unto sin once, and the death sentence cannot be carried out a second time. Now we live, and we live forever. The reward of righteousness is life everlasting. We have nothing less than the righteousness of God, and therefore we can claim the very highest reward.

Living and believing, we believe that we will live and enjoy, and so we press forward with full assurance that our life is secure in our living Head.

July 12

Whom, When, and How to Deliver

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment. (2 Peter 2:9)

The godly are tempted and tried. Faith that is never put to the test is not true faith. But the godly are delivered out of their trials, not by chance or by secondary agencies, but by the Lord Himself. He personally delivers those who trust Him. God loves the godly and Christlike, and He makes a point of knowing where they are and how they are doing.

Sometimes their way seems to be a maze, and they cannot imagine how they are to escape from threatening danger. What they do not know, though, their Lord knows. He knows whom to deliver, when to deliver, and how to deliver. He delivers in the way that is most beneficial to the godly, most crushing to the tempter, and most glorifying to Himself. We can leave the "how" with the Lord, being content to rejoice in the fact that He will, in some way or other, bring His own people through all the dangers, trials, and temptations in this mortal life to His own right hand in glory.

It is not for me to pry into my Lord's secrets today, but to patiently wait for His time, knowing that even if I know nothing, my heavenly Father knows.

July 13

Implicit Trust

For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee; because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 39:18, KJV)

Behold the protecting power of trust in God. The great men of Jerusalem fell by the sword, but poor Ebed-melech was secure, for his confidence was in God. Where else should a man trust but in his Maker? We are foolish when we prefer the creature to the Creator. Oh, that we could live by faith in all things, for then we would be delivered in all times of danger! No one ever trusted in the Lord in vain, and no one ever will.

The Lord says, *I will surely deliver thee*. Notice the divine *surely*. Whatever else may be uncertain, God's care of believers is certain. God Himself is the guardian of the gracious. Under His sacred wing there is safety, even when every danger is around. Can we accept this promise as certain? Then in our present emergency we will find that it stands fast. We might hope to be delivered because we have friends, or because we are wise, or because we can see hopeful signs; but none of these things are half as good as God's simple *because thou hast put thy trust in me*. Dear reader, try living this way. If you try it, you will keep to it all your life, for it is as sweet as it is certain.

July 14

Burdens Cast on Him

Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. (Psalm 55:22)

*I*t is a heavy burden; cast it on Omnipotence. It is your burden now, and it crushes you; but when the Lord takes it, He will make nothing of it. If you are still called to carry it, *He will sustain you*. It will be on Him and not on you. You will be so upheld under it that the burden will be a blessing. Bring the Lord into the matter, and You will stand upright under that which in itself would cause you to bow down.

Our worst fear is that our trial would drive us from the path of duty, but the Lord will never allow this. If we are righteous before Him, He will not allow our affliction to move us from our standing. In Jesus, He accepts us as righteous, and in Jesus, He will keep us so.

What about the present moment? Are you going forth to this day's trial alone? Are your poor shoulders again to be sore with the oppressive load? Do not be so foolish. Tell the Lord all about your burden and leave it with Him. Don't cast your burden down and then take it up again, but cast it on the Lord and leave it there. Then you will walk freely, a joyful and unburdened believer, singing the praises of the Great One who bears your burden.

July 15

The Mourner Comforted

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they
shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)*

We get to Zion through the valley of weeping. One would have thought that mourning and being blessed were in opposition, but the infinitely wise Savior puts them together in this Beatitude. What He has joined together, let no one separate (Mark 10:9). Mourning for sin – for our own sins and for the sins of others – is the Lord's seal set upon His faithful ones. When the Spirit of grace is poured upon the house of David, or any other house, they will mourn. By holy mourning, we receive the best of our blessings, even as the rarest commodities come to us by water. Not only will the mourner be blessed at some future day, but Christ pronounces him blessed even now.

The Holy Spirit will surely comfort those hearts that mourn for sin. They will be comforted by the application of the blood of Jesus and by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. They will be comforted as to the abounding sin of their city and of their age by the assurance that God will glorify Himself, no matter how much people will rebel against Him. They will be comforted with the expectation that they will be entirely freed from sin before long and will soon be taken up to dwell forever in the glorious presence of their Lord.

July 16

A Word to the Lame

I will save the lame. (Zephaniah 3:19)

There are plenty of these lame ones, both male and female. You might meet the lame twenty times in an hour. They are in the right road and are exceedingly anxious to travel on it with diligence, but they are lame and make a sad walk of it. On the heavenly road, there are many cripples. It may be that they say in their hearts, What will become of us? Sin will overtake us; Satan will throw us down. Ready-to-halt is our name and our nature (Psalm 38:17).¹⁰ The Lord can never make good soldiers of us, nor even agile messengers to go on His errands. Well, well! He will save us, and that is not a small thing. He says, *I will save the lame*. In saving us, He will greatly glorify Himself. Everybody will ask, How did this lame woman come to run the race and win the crown? And then the praise will all be given to almighty grace.

Lord, though I halt, or hesitate, or am lame in faith, in prayer, in praise, in service, and in patience, save me, I plead with You! Only You can save such a cripple as I am. Lord, do not let me perish because I am among the last, but gather up by Your grace the slowest of Your pilgrims – even me.

Behold, He has said it will be so, and therefore, like Jacob prevailing in prayer, I go forward even though the socket of my thigh is dislocated (Genesis 32:24-32).

¹⁰ Mr. Ready-to-halt is a character in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

July 17

Valiant for Truth

*The people who know their God will display
strength and take action. (Daniel 11:32)*

The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is His name (Exodus 15:3). Those who enlist under His banner will have a Commander who will train them for the conflict and will give them both strength and courage. The times of which Daniel wrote were of the very worst kind, and then it was promised that the people of God would come out in their best colors. They would be strong and determined to confront the powerful adversary.

Oh, that we may know our God – His power, His faithfulness, and His immutable love – and so may be ready to risk everything in His behalf. He is One whose character excites our enthusiasm and makes us willing to live and to die for Him. Oh, that we may know our God by intimate fellowship with Him, for then we will become like Him and will be prepared to stand up for truth and righteousness. He who comes forth fresh from beholding the face of God will never fear the face of man. If we dwell with Him, we will catch the heroic spirit, and to us a world of enemies will only be as the drop in a bucket. A countless array of men, or even of devils, will seem as little to us as the nations are to God, and He considers them as only grasshoppers (Isaiah 40:22). Oh, to be valiant for truth in this day of falsehood.

July 18

Wilderness Communion

*I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness,
and speak kindly to her. (Hosea 2:14)*

The goodness of God sees us attracted by sin, and it resolves to try upon us the more powerful appeal of love. Do we not remember when He who loves our souls first cast a spell upon us and charmed us away from the fascinations of the world? He will do this again and again, whenever He sees us likely to be ensnared by evil.

He promises to draw us apart, for there He can best deal with us. This separated place is not to be a paradise, but a wilderness, since in such a place there will be nothing to take our attention away from our God. In the deserts of affliction, the presence of the Lord becomes everything to us, and we value His company beyond any value that we set upon it when we sat under our own vine and fig tree in the society of our fellows (Micah 4:4). Solitude and affliction bring more to themselves and to their heavenly Father than any other means.

When thus allured and secluded, the Lord has fine things to say to us for our comfort. He “speaks to our heart,” as the original has it. Oh, that we might have this promise explained to us in our experience! Allured by love, separated by trial, and comforted by the Spirit of truth, may we know the Lord and sing for joy!

July 19

Heavy-Duty Shoes

*Your shoes will be iron and brass; and as Your days,
so will Your strength be. (Deuteronomy 33:25 KJV)*

*T*his verse tells of two things provided for the pilgrim: shoes and strength.

As for the shoes, they are very needful for traveling along rough ways and for trampling upon deadly foes. We will not go barefoot. This would not be suitable for princes of the royal blood. Our shoes will not be at all of the common sort, for they will have soles of durable metal that will not wear out, even if the journey is long and difficult. We will have protection proportionate to the necessities of the road and the battle. Therefore, let us march boldly on, fearing no harm, even though we tread on serpents or set our foot upon the dragon himself.

As for the strength, it will continue as long as our days will continue, and it will be proportioned to the stress and burden of those days. The words are few: *As Your days, so will Your strength be*, but the meaning is full. Today we can look for trial and for work that will require energy, but we can just as confidently look for equal strength. This word given to Asher is also given to us who have faith by which to appropriate it. Let us rise to the holy boldness that it is calculated to create within the believing heart.

July 20

Looking for Him

So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Hebrews 9:28, NKJV)

*T*his is our hope. He to whom we have already looked as coming once to bear the sins of many will have another manifestation to the children of men. This is a happy thought in itself, but that second appearing has certain special characteristics that greatly glorify it.

Our Lord will have ended the business of sin. He has so taken it away from His people and so effectually borne its penalty that He will have nothing to do with it at His second coming. He will present no sin offering, for He will have utterly put sin away.

Our Lord will then complete the salvation of His people. They will be finally and perfectly saved and will in every respect enjoy the fullness of that salvation. He does not come to bear the result of our transgressions, but to bring the result of His obedience. He does not come to remove our condemnation, but to perfect our salvation.

Our Lord so appears only to those who look for Him. He will not be seen in this character by people whose eyes are blinded with self and sin. To them He will be a terrible Judge, and nothing more. We must first look to Him, and then look for Him. In both cases, our look will be life.

July 21

Shine as Many Stars

And they that be wise will shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (Daniel 12:3 KJV)

*T*his is something to wake me up. This is worth living for. To be wise is a noble thing in itself. In this verse it refers to a divine wisdom that only the Lord Himself can bestow. Oh, to know myself, my God, my Savior! May I be so divinely taught that I may carry heavenly truth into practice and live in the light of it! Is my life a wise one? Am I seeking that which I ought to seek? Am I living as I will wish I had lived when I come to die? Only such wisdom can secure eternal brightness for me as of those distant sunlit skies.

To be a winner of souls is a glorious accomplishment. I need to be wise if I am to turn even one person to righteousness, and much more if I am to turn many. Oh, for the knowledge of God, of people, of the Word, and of Christ that will enable me to convert my fellowmen, and to convert large numbers of them! I want to give myself to this, never resting until I accomplish it. This will be better than earning favor with a worldly king. This will make me a star, a shining star, a star shining forever and ever. Yes, and even more, it will make me shine as many stars. Wake yourself up, and may the Lord revive you!

July 22

An Eternal Pledge

I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord. (Hosea 2:19-20)

Pledged and engaged to the Lord! What an honor and a joy! Is Jesus indeed yours by His own humble promise? Then observe that it is forever. He will never break His engagement, much less seek out a divorce against someone joined to Him in marriage bonds.

Three times the Lord says, "I will betroth you." What words He joins together to announce the betrothal! Righteousness comes in to make the covenant legal; no one can forbid these lawful oaths. Judgment sanctions the alliance with its decree; no one can see indiscretion or error in the match. Lovingkindness affirms that this is a union of love, for without love, betrothal is bondage and not blessedness. Meanwhile, mercy smiles and even sings. Yes, she multiplies herself into *compassion* because of the abounding grace of this holy union.

Faithfulness is the registrar and records the marriage, and the Holy Spirit says "Amen" to it as He promises to teach the betrothed heart all the sacred knowledge needful for its high destiny. What a promise!

July 23

Absolutely No Remembrance

*And their sins and their lawless deeds I will
remember no more. (Hebrews 10:17)*

According to this gracious covenant, the Lord treats His people as if they had never sinned. Practically, He forgets all their trespasses. He treats sins of all kinds as if they had never been, as if they were erased from His memory. O miracle of grace! God does here that which in certain aspects is impossible to Him. His mercy works miracles that far transcend all other miracles.

Our God ignores our sin now that the sacrifice of Jesus has ratified the covenant. We can rejoice in Him without fear that He will be provoked to anger against us because of our iniquities. He puts us among the children. He accepts us as righteous. He takes delight in us as if we were perfectly holy. He even puts us into places of trust and makes us guardians of His honor, trustees of the crown jewels, and stewards of the gospel. He considers us worthy and gives us a ministry. This is the highest and most special proof that He does not remember our sins. Even when we forgive an enemy, we are very slow to trust him. We would consider it unwise to do so. But the Lord forgets our sins and treats us as if we had never erred. What a promise this is! Believe it and be happy.

July 24

Perfect Purity

*He who overcomes will thus be clothed in
white garments. (Revelation 3:5)*

Marrior of the cross, fight on! Never rest until your victory is complete, for your eternal reward will prove worthy of a life of warfare.

See, here is perfect purity for you! A few in Sardis kept their garments undefiled (Revelation 3:4), and their reward is to be spotless. Perfect holiness is the prize of our high calling; do not let us miss it.

See, here is joy! You will wear holiday robes like those that people put on at wedding feasts. You will be clothed with gladness and will be made bright with rejoicing. Painful struggles will end in peace of conscience and joy in the Lord.

See, here is victory! You will have your triumph. Palm branch and crown and white robe will be your reward. You will be treated as a conqueror and recognized as such by the Lord Himself.

See, here are priestly garments! You will stand before the Lord in such clothing as the sons of Aaron wore. You will offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving and draw near unto the Lord with the incense of praise.

Who would not fight for a Lord who gives such large honors to the very least of His faithful servants? Who would not be clothed in a fool's coat for Christ's sake, knowing that He will robe us with glory?

July 25

Nothing to Alarm Us

*Go your way to the end; then you will enter into
rest and rise again for your allotted portion
at the end of the age. (Daniel 12:13)*

We cannot understand all the prophecies, yet we regard them with pleasure and not with dismay. There can be nothing in the Father's decree that should rightly alarm His child. Even if the abomination of desolation is set up (Matthew 24:15), the true believer will not be defiled. Instead, he will be purified, made white, and tried. Even if the earth is burned up, no smell of fire will come upon the chosen. Amid the crash of matter and the wreck of worlds, the Lord will preserve His own.

Calmly resolute in duty, brave in conflict, and patient in suffering, let us go our way, keeping to our path, neither swerving from it nor lingering in it. The end will come; let us go our way until it does.

Rest will be ours. All other things swing here and there, but our foundation stands sure. God rests in His love, and therefore, we rest in it. Our peace is, and always will be, like a river (Isaiah 66:12). A portion in the heavenly Canaan is ours, and we will stand in it, come what may. The God of Daniel will give a worthy portion to all who dare to be decided for truth and holiness as Daniel was. No den of lions will deprive us of our certain inheritance.

July 26

A Change of Name

"It will come about in that day," declares the Lord, "that you will call Me Ishi and will no longer call Me Baali. For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, so that they will be mentioned by their names no more." (Hosea 2:16-17)

That day has come. We view our God no more as Baal, our tyrant lord and mighty master, for we are not under law, but under grace. We now think of our God as our Ishi, our beloved husband, our lord in love, our next-of-kin in bonds of sacred relationship. We do not serve Him less obediently, but we serve Him for a higher and more endearing reason. We no longer tremble under His whip, but rejoice in His love. The slave is changed into a child, and the task into a pleasure.

Is it this way with you, dear reader? Has grace cast out slavish fear and replaced it with loyal love? How happy we are in such an experience! Now we call the Lord's day a delight (Isaiah 58:13), and worship is never a weariness. Prayer is now a privilege, and praise is a holiday. To obey is heaven; to give to the cause of God is a banquet. All things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our mouth is filled with singing and our heart with music. Blessed be our heavenly Ishi forever and ever.

July 27

More than Mere Words

*I will give you the holy and sure
blessings of David. (Acts 13:34)*

Nothing of man is certain, but everything of God is so. His covenant blessings, or mercies, are especially certain, just as David said: An everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things, and secured (2 Samuel 23:5).

We are sure that the Lord intended to give His mercy. He did not speak mere words. There is substance and truth in every one of His promises. His mercies are mercies indeed. Even if a promise seems as if it must fail by reason of death, it never will, for the good Lord will make His word good.

We are sure that the Lord will give promised mercies to all His covenanted ones. They will come in due time to all the chosen of the Lord. They are certain to all His true children, from the least of them unto the greatest of them. We are sure that the Lord will continue His mercies to His own people. He does not give and take. What He has granted us is a sign of much more. That which we have not yet received is as certain as that which has already come. Therefore, let us wait before the Lord and be still. There is no justifiable reason for the least doubt. God's love, word, and faithfulness are certain. Many things are questionable, but of the Lord we sing:

For His mercies will endure
Ever faithful, ever sure.¹¹

11 This is from a hymn by John Milton that begins with "Let us, with a gladsome mind."

July 28

Bow Down; Be Lifted Up

*Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that
He may exalt you at the proper time. (1 Peter 5:6)*

*T*his is the same as a promise: if we will humble ourselves, the Lord will lift us up. Humility leads to honor. Submission is the way to exaltation. That same hand of God that presses us down is waiting to raise us up when we are prepared to bear the blessing. We stoop in order to conquer. Many bow before people, yet do not get the support they desire; but he who humbles himself under the hand of God will not fail to be enriched, uplifted, sustained, and comforted by the ever-gracious One. It is a habit of God to cast down the proud and lift up the lowly (Luke 1:52).

Yet there is a time for the Lord to work. We should now humble ourselves, even at this present moment, and we are obligated to keep on doing so whether the Lord lays His afflicting hand upon us or not. When the Lord smites, it is our special duty to accept the chastisement with profound submission. But as for the Lord's exaltation of us, that can only come *at the proper time*, and God is the best judge of that day and hour. Do we cry out impatiently for the blessing? Would we want untimely honor? What are we doing? Surely we are not truly humbled, or we would wait with quiet submission. Let us do so.

July 29

He Routs Our Enemies

He has cleared away your enemies. (Zephaniah 3:15)

*W*hat a clearing away that was! Satan has lost his throne in our nature just as he lost his seat in heaven. Our Lord Jesus has destroyed the enemy's reigning power over us. He may worry us, but he cannot claim us as his own. His chains are no longer upon our spirits. If the Son has made us free, we are free indeed (John 8:36).

The archenemy is still the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10), but our Lord has even driven him from this position. Our Advocate silences our accuser. The Lord rebukes our enemies and pleads the causes of our soul so that no harm comes from all the devil's attacks.

As a tempter, the evil spirit still assaults us and maneuvers himself into our minds, but there, too, he is cast out as to his former preeminence. He slithers about like a serpent, but he cannot rule like a sovereign. He hurls in blasphemous thoughts when he has the opportunity, but what a relief it is when he is told to be quiet and is made to slip away like a defeated dog!

Lord, do this for any who are at this time worried and wearied by his barking. Cast out their enemy, and be glorious in their eyes. You have cast him down. Lord, cast him out. Oh, that You would banish him from the world!

July 30

Promise of Future Meeting

I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice. (John 16:22)

*H*e will certainly come a second time, and then when He sees us and we see Him, there will be rejoicing indeed. Oh, for that joyous return! But this promise is being daily fulfilled in another sense. Our gracious Lord has many “again” in His dealings with us. He gave us pardon, and He sees us again and repeats the absolving word as new sins trouble us. He has revealed to us our acceptance before God, and when our faith in that blessing grows a little dim, He comes to us again and again and says, *Peace be with you* (John 20:21), and our hearts are glad.

Beloved, all our past mercies are indications of future mercies. If Jesus has been with us, He will see us again. Do not look at a former kindness as something dead and buried and to be mourned over; but regard it as a seed sown that will grow, push its head up from the dust, and say, *I will see you again*. Are the times dark because Jesus is not with us as He used to be? Let us gather up courage, for He will not be away for long. His feet are as those of a deer or a young hart, and they will soon bring Him to us. Therefore let us begin to rejoice, since He says to us even now, *I will see you again*.

July 31

An Appeal and Deliverance

*Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue
you, and you will honor Me. (Psalm 50:15)*

This is a promise indeed! It is an urgent occasion – *the day of trouble*. It is dark at noon on such a day, and every hour seems darker than the one that came before it. This promise, then, is in season. It is written for the cloudy day.

This is advice from our God, who lowers Himself to help us: *Call upon Me*. We should not need the exhortation, for it should be our constant habit all day long and every day. What a mercy to have the liberty to call upon God! What wisdom to make good use of it! How foolish to go running around to people! The Lord invites us to lay our case before Him, and we should certainly not hesitate to do so.

This is reassuring encouragement: *I shall rescue you*. Whatever the trouble may be, the Lord makes no exceptions, but promises full, certain, and happy deliverance. He Himself will work out our deliverance by His own hand. We believe it, and the Lord honors faith.


This is an ultimate result: *You will honor Me*. Yes, we will do that most abundantly. When He has delivered us, we will loudly praise Him; and since He is sure to do it, let us begin to glorify Him at once.

August

August 1

His Covenant Reaches Children

*I will establish My covenant between Me and you
and your descendants after you throughout their
generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to
you and to your descendants after you. (Genesis 17:7)*

 Lord, You have made a covenant with me, Your servant, in Christ Jesus my Lord; and now I ask You, let my children be included in its gracious provisions. Allow me to believe that this promise is made to me as well as to Abraham. I know that my children are born in sin and brought forth in iniquity (Psalms 51:5), even as those of other people. Therefore, I ask nothing on the basis of their birth, for I well know that that which is born of the flesh is flesh (John 3:6), and nothing more. Lord, make them to be born under Your covenant of grace by Your Holy Spirit!

I pray for my descendants throughout all generations. Be their God as You are mine. My highest honor is that You have permitted me to serve You. May my offspring serve You in all years to come. O God of Abraham, be the God of his Isaac! O God of Hannah, accept her Samuel!

If, Lord, You have favored me in my family. I pray that You will remember other households of Your people that remain unblessed. Be the God of all the families of Israel. Do not let one of those who fear Your name be tried with a godless and wicked household, for Your Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

August 2

Speak What He Teaches

*Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth,
and teach you what you are to say. (Exodus 4:12)*

*M*any true servants of the Lord are slow of speech, and when called upon to plead for their Lord, they are afraid that they will harm the cause of Christ by not speaking well on His behalf. In such a case, it is good to remember that the Lord made the tongue that is so slow, and we must be careful that we do not blame our Maker. It might be that a slow tongue is not as great an evil as a fast one, and a few words might be more of a blessing than floods of verbiage. It is also quite certain that real saving power does not lie in human rhetoric with its figurative speech, pretty phrases, and grand displays. Lack of fluency is not as much of a deficiency as it might seem.

If God is with our mouth and with our mind, we will have something better than the sounding brass of eloquence or the tinkling cymbal of persuasion. God's teaching is wisdom. His presence is power. Pharaoh had more reason to be afraid of stammering Moses than of the most fluent talker in Egypt, for what he said had power in it. He spoke plagues and deaths. If the Lord is with us in our natural weakness, we will be encompassed with supernatural power. Therefore, let us speak boldly for Jesus, as we should speak.

August 3

The Right to Holy Things

But if the priest buy any soul with his money, he shall eat of it, and he that is born in his house: they shall eat of his meat. (Leviticus 22:11, KJV)

Strangers, sojourners, and servants upon hire were not to eat of holy things. It is the same way still in spiritual matters. But two groups of people were free at the sacred table – those who were bought with the priest's money and those who were born into the priest's house. Bought and born were the two indisputable proofs of a right to holy things.

Bought. Our great High Priest has bought with a price all those who put their trust in Him (1 Corinthians 6:20). They are His absolute property – completely the Lord's. Not for what they are in themselves, but for their owner's sake they are admitted into the same privileges that He Himself enjoys, and *they shall eat of his meat*. He has meat to eat that the people of the world know nothing about (John 4:32). Because *you belong to Christ* (1 Corinthians 3:23), you will share with your Lord.

Born. This is an equally sure way to privilege. If we are born in the Priest's house, we take our place with the rest of the family. Regeneration makes us fellow heirs and of the same body, and therefore the peace, joy, and glory that the Father has given to Christ, Christ has given to us. Redemption and regeneration have given us a double claim to the divine permit of this promise.

August 4

He Blesses and Keeps

The Lord bless you, and keep you. (Numbers 6:24)

*T*his first clause of the high priest's benediction is basically a promise. The blessing that our great High Priest pronounces upon us is sure to come, for He speaks the mind of God.

What a joy to abide under the divine blessing! It puts a gracious flavor into all things. If we are blessed, then all our possessions and enjoyments are blessed. Even our losses and crosses and disappointments are blessed. God's blessing is deep, emphatic, and beneficial. A man's blessing may begin and end in words, but the blessing of the Lord sanctifies and makes one rich. The best wish we can have for our dearest friend is not "May you be prosperous," but *The Lord bless you*.

It is an equally delightful thing to be kept by God – to be kept by Him, near Him, and in Him. Those who are kept by God are kept indeed. They are preserved from evil. They are reserved unto endless happiness. God's keeping goes along with His blessing, to establish it and to cause it to endure.

I desire that the rich blessing and certain keeping pronounced in this verse will come upon every reader who may at this moment be looking at these lines. Please pray the text to God as a prayer for His servants.

August 5

Law in the Heart

*The law of his God is in his heart; his
steps do not slip. (Psalm 37:31)*

*I*f the law is put into the heart, then the whole person is right. This is where the law should be, for then it lies, like the tables of stone in the ark (Hebrews 9:4), in the place appointed for it. When it is in the head, it puzzles, when on the back, it burdens, and when in the heart, it upholds.

What a fine phrase is used here: *the law of his God*! When we know the Lord as our own God, His law becomes liberty to us. God with us in covenant makes us eager to obey His will and walk in His commands. Is the precept my Father's precept? Then I delight in it.

We are guaranteed in this verse that the obedient-hearted person will be sustained in every step that he takes. He will do that which is right, and he will therefore do that which is wise. Holy action is always the most prudent, even if it might not seem to be so at the time. We are moving along the great high road of God's providence and grace when we keep to the way of His law. The Word of God has never misled a single person yet. Its plain directions to walk humbly, justly, lovingly, and in the fear of the Lord are as much words of wisdom to make our way prosperous as they are rules of holiness to keep our garments clean. He who walks securely walks righteously.

August 6

Go; Take Your Property

See, the Lord your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 1:21)

There is a heritage of grace that we should be bold enough to win for our possession. All that one believer has gained is free to another. We can be strong in faith, fervent in love, and abundant in labor. There is nothing to prevent it. Let us go up and take possession. The sweetest experience and the brightest grace are as much for us as for any of our brethren. God has set it before us. No one can deny our right. Let us go up and possess it in His name.

The world also lies before us to be conquered for the Lord Jesus. We are not to leave any country or corner of it unconquered. That poor neighborhood near our house is not near us to obstruct our endeavors, but to gain from them. We only have to summon enough courage to go forward, and we will win sad homes and hard hearts for Jesus. Let us never leave the people in a lane or alley to die because we do not have enough faith in Jesus and His gospel to go up and possess the land. No place is too rough and no person is so profane as to be beyond the power of grace. Cowardice, begone! Faith marches to the conquest.

August 7

Rules for Prosperity

Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. (Joshua 1:7)

*Y*es, the Lord will be with us in our holy war, but He demands of us that we strictly follow His rules. Our victories will very much depend upon our obeying Him with all our heart, throwing strength and courage into the actions of our faith. If we are half-hearted, we cannot expect more than half a blessing.

We must obey the Lord with care and thoughtfulness. Be careful to do is the phrase used, and it is full of meaning. This refers to every part of the divine will; we must obey with universal readiness. Our rule of conduct is according to all the law. We cannot pick and choose, but we must take the Lord's commands as they come, one and all. In all this we must go on with precision and faithfulness. Our course is to be a straightforward course that curves neither to the right nor to the left. We are not to err by being more rigid than the law, nor turn aside because of flippancy to a more free and easy way. With such obedience, there will come spiritual prosperity.

*O Lord, help us to see that this is so! We
will not test Your promise in vain.*

August 8

Confidence Not Misplaced

The Lord God helps Me. (Isaiah 50:7)

These are prophetic words of the Messiah about the day of His obedience unto death, when He gave His back to those who struck Him and His cheeks to those who plucked off His beard (Isaiah 50:6). He was confident of divine support, and He trusted in The Lord.

Your sorrows are as the small dust of the balance compared with your Lord's! Can you not believe that the Lord God will help you? Your Lord was in a distinct position, for as the representative of sinful men – their substitute and sacrifice – it was necessary for the Father to leave Him and cause Him to come under desertion of soul. No such necessity is laid upon you. You are not compelled to cry, *Why have You forsaken me?* (Matthew 27:46). Your Savior, even in such a situation, still relied upon God, and can you not rely on Him too? He died for you, making it impossible that you would be left alone. Therefore, be of good cheer.

In this day's labors or trials say, *The Lord God helps Me. Go forth boldly. Set your face like a flint (Isaiah 50:7)*, and resolve that no weakness or shame will come near you. If God helps, who can hinder? If you are certain of omnipotent aid, what can be too heavy for you? Begin the day joyously, and let no shadow of doubt come between you and the eternal sunshine.

August 9

Pruning in Order to Bear Fruit

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. (John 15:2)

*T*his is a precious promise to someone who lives for fruitfulness. At first it seems to have a sharp aspect. Must the fruitful bough be pruned? Must the knife cut even the best and most useful? There is no doubt that it is so, for very much of our Lord's purging work is done by means of afflictions of one kind or another. It is not the evil, but the good, who have the promise of tribulation in this life. But then, the end makes up more than enough for the painful nature of the means. If we can bring forth more fruit for our Lord, we will not mind the pruning and the loss of leaves.


Still, purging is sometimes worked by the Word apart from trials, and this takes away whatever appeared rough in the flavor of the promise. We will, by the Word, be made more gracious and more useful. The Lord who has made us fruit-bearing in a way will work on us until we reach a far higher degree of fertility. Is not this a great joy? Certainly there is more comfort in a promise of fruitfulness than if we had been promised riches, health, or honor.

*Lord Jesus, quickly fulfill Your gracious word to me,
and cause me to abound in fruit to Your praise!*

August 10

He Lowers to Raise

*The Lord makes poor and rich; He brings
low, He also exalts. (1 Samuel 2:7)*

 All my changes come from Him who never changes. If I had grown rich, I would have seen His hand in it, and I would have praised Him. Let me equally see His hand if I am made poor, and let me just as wholeheartedly praise Him. When we go down in the world, it is of the Lord, and so we can take it patiently. When we rise in the world, it is of the Lord, and we can accept it thankfully. In any case, the Lord has done it, and it is good.

It seems that The Lord's way is to lower those whom He intends to raise, and to strip those whom He intends to clothe. If it is His way, it is the wisest and best way. If I am now enduring being brought low, I can well rejoice, because I see in it the preface to being lifted up. The more we are humbled by grace, the more we will be exalted in glory. The impoverishment that will be overruled for our enrichment is to be welcomed.

*O Lord, You have taken me down lately and made me feel
my insignificance and sin. It is not a pleasant experience,
but I pray that You will make it a profitable one to me.*

*Oh, that You would in this way prepare me to bear a
greater weight of delight and of usefulness; and when I am
ready for it, then grant it to me, for Jesus' sake! Amen.*

August 11

Waiting, Not Running

*My soul waits in silence for God only; from
Him is my salvation. (Psalm 62:1)*

What a blessed position it is to be waiting truly and only upon the Lord. Let this be our condition all day and every day: waiting for His desire, waiting in His service, waiting in joyful expectation, waiting in prayer – and being content. When a soul waits in this way, it is in the best and truest condition of a creature before his Creator, a servant before his Master, and a child before his Father. We allow no instruction to God, nor complaining of Him. We will not allow any pouting and no distrust. At the same time, we practice no running before the cloud and no seeking others for help, for neither of these would be waiting upon God. God, and God alone, is the expectation of our hearts.

Blessed assurance! Salvation is coming from Him. It is on the way. It will come from Him and from no one else. He will have all the glory of it, for He alone can and will perform it, and He will perform it most certainly in His own time and manner. He will save from doubt, suffering, slander, and distress. Although we see no sign of it as yet, we are satisfied to wait for the Lord's will, for we have no doubt about His love and faithfulness. He will make certain work of it before long, and we will praise Him at once for the coming mercy.

August 12

Light in Darkness

*For You are my lamp, O Lord; and the Lord
illumines my darkness. (2 Samuel 22:29)*

Am I in the light? Then You, O Lord, are my lamp. If You would leave me, my joy would be gone; but as long as You are with me, I can do without the torches of time and the candles of created comfort. What a light the presence of God casts on all things! We heard of a lighthouse that could be seen for twenty miles, but our God is not only a God who is near, but He is seen far off, even in the enemy's country. O Lord, I am as happy as an angel when Your love fills my heart. You are all my desire.

Am I in the dark? Then the Lord will illumine my darkness. Before long, things will change. Matters may grow more and more dreary, and one cloud may be piled upon another, but if it grows so dark that I cannot see my own hand, I will still see the hand of the Lord. When I cannot find a light within me, or among my friends, or in the whole world, the Lord, who said, "Let there be light"; and there was light (Genesis 1:3), can say the same again. He will speak me into the sunshine yet. I will not die, but live. The day is already dawning. This sweet text shines like a morning star. I will clap my hands for joy before many hours are passed.

August 13

Before and During the Call

*It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer;
and while they are still speaking, I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24)*

*T*his is quick work! The Lord hears us before we call, and He often answers us in the same speedy way. Foreseeing our needs and our prayers, He so arranges providence that before the need actually arises, He has supplied it. Before the trial assails us, He has armed us against it. This is the promptness of omniscience, and we have often seen it exercised. Before we dreamed of the affliction that was coming, the strong consolation that was to sustain us under it had arrived. What a prayer-answering God we have!

The second clause suggests the telephone. Even though God is in heaven and we are upon earth, He makes our word, like His own word, to travel very swiftly. When we pray properly, we speak into the ear of God. Our gracious Mediator presents our petitions at once, and the great Father hears them and smiles upon them. What marvelous praying this is! Who would not be much in prayer when he knows that he has the ear of the King of kings? I will pray today in faith, not only believing that I will be heard, but that I am heard; not only that I will be answered, but that I have the answer already.

Holy Spirit, help me in this!

August 14

Child Chastisement Is Not Forever

*Thus I will afflict the descendants of David
for this, but not always. (1 Kings 11:39)*

There is discipline in the family of grace, and that discipline is severe enough to make it an evil and a bitter thing to sin. Solomon, turned aside by his foreign wives, had set up other gods and had grievously provoked the God of his father. Therefore, ten of the twelve parts of the kingdom were torn away and set up as a rival state. This was a severe affliction to the house of David, and it came upon that dynasty distinctly from the hand of God as the result of unholy conduct. The Lord will chasten His most beloved servants if they do not fully obey His laws. Maybe such chastening is upon us at this very hour. Let us humbly cry, *O Lord, show me the reason that You contend with me.*

What sweet saving words these are: *but not always!* The punishment of sin is everlasting, but the fatherly chastisement for sin in a child of God is only for a season. The sickness, the poverty, and the depression of spirit will pass away when they have had their intended effect. Remember, we are not under law, but under grace. The rod may make us hurt, but the sword will not be used against us to cause us to die. Our present grief is meant to bring us to repentance so that we will not be destroyed with the wicked.

August 15

A Name Guarantee

Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

*N*ot every believer has learned to pray in Christ's name. To ask not only for His sake, but in His name, as authorized by Him, is a high order of prayer. We would not dare to ask for some certain things in that blessed name, for it would be wretchedly profaning His name; but when the petition is so clearly right that we dare set the name of Jesus to it, then it must be granted.

Prayer is all the more sure to succeed because it is for the Father's glory through the Son. It glorifies His truth, His faithfulness, His power, and His grace. The granting of prayer, when offered in the name of Jesus, reveals the Father's love to Him and the honor that He has put upon Him. The glory of Jesus and of the Father are so wrapped up together that the grace that magnifies the one magnifies the other. The channel is made famous through the fullness of the fountain, and the fountain is honored through the channel by which it flows. If the answering of our prayers would dishonor our Lord, we would not pray; but since He is glorified in this, we will pray without ceasing in that dear name in which God and His people have a fellowship of delight.

August 16

Uncover and Confess Sin

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. (Proverbs 28:13)

*T*his is the way of mercy for a guilty and repenting sinner. He must stop his habit of covering sin. This is attempted by falsehood, which denies sin; by hypocrisy, which conceals it; by boasting, which justifies it; and by loud profession, which tries to make amends for it.

The sinner's business is to confess and forsake sin. The two must go together. Confession must be honestly made to the Lord Himself, and it must include within itself an acknowledgment of the wrong, a sense of its evil, and an abhorrence of it. We must not throw the fault upon others, nor blame circumstances, nor plead natural weakness. We must be completely honest and forthright and plead guilty to the indictment. There can be no mercy until this is done.

Furthermore, we must forsake the evil. Having owned up to our sin, we must disown all present and future intent to remain in it. We cannot remain in rebellion and at the same time dwell with the King's majesty. The habit of evil must be ended, together with all places, companions, pursuits, and books that might lead us astray. Not for confession nor for reformation, but in connection with them we find pardon by faith in the blood of Jesus.

August 17

Who Has the Majority?

He answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (2 Kings 6:16)

Horses and chariots and a large army confined the prophet in Dothan. His young servant was alarmed. How could they escape from such a body of armed men? But the prophet had eyes that his servant did not have, and he could see a greater army with far superior weapons guarding him from all harm. Horses of fire are mightier than horses of flesh, and chariots of fire are far preferable to chariots of iron.

It is the same way today. The adversaries of truth are many, influential, learned, and crafty, and truth does not do well at their hands – yet the man of God has no reason to fear. Forces, both seen and unseen, of the most powerful kind, are on the side of righteousness. God has armies in ambush that will reveal themselves in the hour of need. The forces that are on the side of the good and the true far outweigh the powers of evil.

Therefore, let us keep our spirits up and walk with the stride of those who possess a joyous secret that has lifted them above all fear. We are on the winning side. The battle may be intense, but we know how it will end. Faith, having God with it, is in a clear majority: *Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.*

August 18

Seekers, Finders

*If you seek Him, He will let you find
Him. (1 Chronicles 28:9)*

*W*e need our God. He is to be had for the seeking, and He will not deny Himself to any of us if we personally seek His face. It is not if you deserve Him, or if you earn His approval, but simply *if you seek Him*. Those who already know the Lord must continue seeking His face by prayer, by diligent service, and by holy gratitude. He will not refuse His favor and fellowship to those who do so. Yet those who do not yet know Him to their souls' rest should at once begin seeking Him, never ceasing until they find Him as their Savior, their Friend, their Father, and their God.

What strong assurance this promise gives to the seeker! *He who seeks finds* (Matthew 7:8). Yes, you – if you seek God, you will find Him. When you find Him, you have found life, forgiveness, sanctification, preservation, and glory. Will you not seek, and continue seeking, since you will not seek in vain?

Dear friend, seek the Lord at once. This is the place, and now is the time. Bend that stiff knee. Bend that even stiffer neck, and cry out for God, for the living God. In the name of Jesus, seek cleansing and justification. You will not be refused. This is David's testimony to his son Solomon, and it is my personal witness to the reader. Believe it and act upon it, for Jesus' sake.

August 19

Reward for the Righteous

*And men will say, "Surely there is a reward for the righteous;
surely there is a God who judges on earth!" (Psalm 58:11)*

God's judgments in this life are not always clearly seen, for in many cases one event happens the same to all. This life is the state of probation, not of punishment or reward. Yet at times God works terrible things in righteousness, and even the careless are compelled to admit His power.

Even in this life, righteousness has that kind of reward that it prefers above all others – namely, the smile of God, which creates a quiet conscience. Sometimes other restitution follows, for God will be in no one's debt. At the same time, though, the main reward of the righteous lies in the hereafter.

Meanwhile, on a large scale, we mark the presence of the great Ruler among the nations. He breaks oppressive thrones in pieces and punishes guilty nations. No one can study the history of the rise and fall of empires without perceiving that there is a power that makes for righteousness and, in the end, brings iniquity before its judgment seat, condemning it with unsparing justice. Sin will not go unpunished, and goodness will not remain unrewarded. The Judge of all the earth must do right (Genesis 18:25). Therefore, let us fear before Him and no longer fear the power of the wicked.

August 20

Deliverance Not Limited

*From six troubles He will deliver you, even in
seven evil will not touch you. (Job 5:19)*

*L*n this verse, Eliphaz spoke the truth about God. We can have as many troubles as the workdays of the week, but the God who worked on those six days will work for us until our deliverance is complete. We will rest with Him and in Him on our Sabbath. The rapid succession of trials is one of the severest tests of faith. Before we have recovered from one blow, it is followed by another and another until we are unsteady. Still, the equally quick succession of deliverances is exceedingly comforting. New songs are rung out upon the anvil by the hammer of affliction until we see in the spiritual world the antitype of "The Harmonious Blacksmith."¹² Our trust is that when the Lord makes our trials six, they will be six, and no more.

It may be that we have no rest day, for a mariner's troubles may come upon us. What then? *In seven evil will not touch you.* Evil may roar at us, but it will be kept at more than arm's length and will not even touch us. Its hot breath may trouble us, but its little finger cannot be laid upon us.

With the belt of truth girding our loins (Ephesians 6:14), we will meet the six or the seven troubles and leave fear to those who have no Father, no Savior, and no Sanctifier.

12 "The Harmonious Blacksmith" is the name of the final movement of George Frideric Handel's *Suite No. 5 in E Major*.

August 21

Night of Weeping; Joyous Day

For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning. (Psalm 30:5)

Even one moment under our Father's anger seems very long, yet it is only a moment after all. If we grieve His Spirit, we cannot look for His smile; yet He is a God ready to pardon (Nehemiah 9:17), and He soon puts aside all remembrance of our sin. When we grow weak and are ready to die because of His frown, His favor puts new life into us.

This verse has another note of the semi-trembling kind. Our weeping night soon turns into a joyous day. Brevity is the mark of mercy in the hour of the chastisement of believers. The Lord does not love to use the rod on His chosen. He gives a strike or two, and it is all over. Yes, and the life and the joy that follow the anger and the weeping more than make up for the wholesome sorrow.

Come and begin your hallelujahs! Do not weep all through the night, but wipe your eyes in anticipation of the morning. These tears are dews that intend as much good for us as the sunbeams of tomorrow. Tears clear the eyes for the sight of God in His grace and make the vision of His favor more precious. A night of sorrow supplies those shades of the pictures by which the highlights are brought out with distinction. All is well.

August 22

Wrath to God's Glory

*Surely the wrath of man will praise thee: the remainder
of wrath shalt thou restrain. (Psalm 76:10 KJV)*

Wicked people will be wrathful. We must endure their anger as the badge of our calling and the indication of our separation from them. If we were of the world, the world would love its own (John 15:19). Our comfort is that the wrath of man will be made to contribute to the glory of God. When the wicked crucified the Son of God in their wrath, they were unknowingly fulfilling the divine purpose, and in a thousand cases the willfulness of the ungodly is doing the same. They think of themselves as free, but like convicts in chains, they are unconsciously working out the decrees of the Almighty.

The devices of the wicked are overruled for their defeat. They act in a suicidal way and thwart their own plans. Nothing will come of their wrath that can do us any real harm. When they burned the martyrs, the smoke that blew from the stake sickened the adherents of Roman Catholicism more than anything else.

Meanwhile, the Lord has a muzzle and a chain for bears. He restrains the more furious wrath of the enemy. He is like a worker in a grain mill who holds back the mass of the water in the stream, and what he does allow to flow, he uses to turn his wheel. Let us not sigh, but sing. All is well, no matter how hard the wind blows.

August 23

Love and Seek True Wisdom

*I love those who love me; and those who diligently
seek me will find me. (Proverbs 8:17)*

*W*isdom loves those who love her and seeks those who seek her. He who seeks to be wise is already wise, and he who diligently seeks wisdom has almost found it. What is true of wisdom in general is especially true of wisdom embodied in our Lord Jesus. We are to love and seek Him, and in return we will enjoy His love and find Him.

Our business is to seek Jesus early in life. Happy are the young whose morning is spent with Jesus! It is never too soon to seek the Lord Jesus. Early seekers make certain finders. We should seek Him early by diligence. Thriving tradesmen are early risers, and thriving saints seek Jesus eagerly. Those who are enriched by Jesus have given their hearts to seeking Him. We must seek Him first, and thus earliest. Above all things, we must seek Jesus – Jesus first and nothing else, even as a close second.

The blessing is that He will be found. He reveals Himself more and more clearly to our search. Happy are those who seek One who, when He is found, remains with them forever – a treasure growingly precious to their hearts and understandings.

*Lord Jesus, I have found You; be found by me to
an unutterable degree of joyous satisfaction.*

August 24

God above Human Philosophy

*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom
of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever
I will set aside. (1 Corinthians 1:19)*

*T*his verse is threatening as far as the worldly-wise are concerned, but to the simple believer it is a promise. The professedly learned are always trying to bring to nothing the faith of the humble believer, but they fail in their attempts. Their arguments break down, their theories fall under their own weight, and their deep-laid plots are discovered before their purpose is accomplished. The old gospel is not yet extinct, nor will it be while the Lord lives. If it could have been destroyed, it would have perished from off the earth long ago.

We cannot destroy the wisdom of the wise, nor do we need to attempt it, for the work is in far better hands. The Lord Himself says, *I will*, and He is never determined to do anything that He does not do. Twice in this verse He declares His purpose, and we can rest assured that He will not turn aside from it.

What complete work the Lord makes of philosophy and "modern thought" when He puts His hand to it! He brings the fine appearance down to nothing. He utterly destroys the wood, hay, and stubble (1 Corinthians 3:12). It is written that it will be so, and so it will be.

Lord, make quick work of it. Amen, and amen.

August 25

Food and Rest

*"I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest,"
declares the Lord God. (Ezekiel 34:15)*

*U*nder the Divine Shepherd, saints are fed to the full. Theirs is not a long-winded, unsatisfying mess of mere human "thought," but the Lord feeds them upon the solid, substantial truth of divine revelation. There is real nourishment for the soul in Scripture that is brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself is the true life-sustaining food of believers. In this verse, our Great Shepherd promises that this sacred nourishment will be given to us by Him personally. If, on the Lord's Day, our earthly shepherd is empty-handed, the Lord is not.

When filled with holy truth, the mind rests. Those whom The Lord feeds are at peace. No dog will worry them, no wolf will devour them, and no restless tendencies will disturb them. They will lie down and digest the food that they have enjoyed. The doctrines of grace are not only sustaining, but comforting, for in them we have the means for building up and lying down. If preachers do not give us rest, let us look to the Lord for it.

May the Lord cause us to feed in the pastures of the Word today, and make us to lie down in them. May no indiscretion or worry mark this day, but only meditation and peace.

August 26

He Who Is of Tender Conscience

I will judge between one sheep and another. (Ezekiel 34:22)

*S*ome people are healthy and flourishing, and therefore they are unkind to the weak. This is a grievous sin and causes much sorrow. To shove with one's side and shoulder and to push the diseased with the horn are sad methods of offense in the assemblies of professing believers. The Lord takes note of these proud and unkind deeds, and He is greatly angered by them, for He loves the weak.

Are you one of the despised? Are you a mourner in Zion and a marked man because of your tender conscience? Do your brethren judge you harshly? Do not resent their conduct. Above all, let him not push and shove in return. Leave the matter in the Lord's hands. He is the Judge. Why would we want to intrude upon His role? He will decide much more righteously than we can. His time for judgment is the best, and we do not need to be in a hurry to hasten it on. Let the hard-hearted oppressor tremble. Even though he may ride roughshod over others with impunity for now, all his proud speeches are noted, and for every one of them an account must be given before the judgment seat of the great Judge.

Patience! Patience! The Lord knows Your trouble. Your Jesus has compassion upon you!

August 27

Choice Men

I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. (Isaiah 48:10)

This has long been the motto set before our eyes upon the wall of our bedroom, and in many ways it has also been written on our hearts. It is no little thing to be chosen by God. God's choice makes chosen people fine people. It is better to be the elect of God than the elect of a whole nation. So eminent is this privilege that we very joyfully accept whatever downside can be attributed to it, just as the Jew ate the bitter herbs for the sake of the Passover Lamb. We choose the furnace since God chooses us in it.

We are chosen as an afflicted people and not as a prosperous people, chosen not in the palace, but in the furnace. In the furnace, beauty is marred, fashion is destroyed, strength is melted, and glory is consumed, and yet it is here that eternal love reveals its secrets and declares its choice. So it has been in our case. In times of severest trial, God has made our calling and election plain to us, and we have made it sure (2 Peter 1:10); then we have chosen the Lord to be our God, and He has shown that we are assuredly His chosen. Therefore, if today the furnace is heated seven times hotter (Daniel 3:19), we will not fear it, for the glorious Son of God will walk with us amid the glowing coals (Daniel 3:25).

August 28

Out of Any Circumstance

*As for me, I shall call upon God, and the
Lord will save me. (Psalm 55:16)*

*Yes, I must and will pray. What else can I do? What more can I do?
Betrayed, forsaken, grieved, and perplexed, O my Lord, I will call
upon You.*

My Ziklag is in ashes (1 Samuel 30:3) and people speak of stoning me (1 Samuel 30:6), but I encourage my heart in the Lord, who will carry me through this trial as He has carried me through so many others. The Lord will save me. I am sure He will, and I declare my faith.

The Lord and no one else will save me. I desire no other helper, and I would not trust in an arm of flesh even if I could. I will cry to Him evening and morning and noon (Psalm 55:17), and I will cry to no one else, for He is all sufficient.

I do not know how He will save me, but I know that He will. He will do it in the best and surest way, and He will do it in the largest, truest, and fullest sense. The great I Am will bring me out of this trouble and all future troubles, just as surely as He lives. When death comes and all the mysteries of eternity follow, it will still be true that *the Lord will save me*. This will be my song all throughout this autumn day. Is it not as a ripe apple from the tree of life? I will feed upon it. How sweet it is to my taste!

August 29

Plentiful Refreshment

Their life will be like a watered garden. (Jeremiah 31:12)

Oh, to have one's soul under heavenly cultivation – no longer a wilderness, but a garden of the Lord! Enclosed from the waste, walled around by grace, planted by instruction, visited by love, weeded by heavenly discipline, and guarded by divine power, one's favored soul is prepared to yield fruit unto the Lord.

But a garden may become parched for lack of water, and then all its herbs decline and are ready to die. How soon would this be the case with you if the Lord were to leave you! In the East, a garden without water soon ceases to be a garden at all. Nothing can come to perfection, grow, or even live. When irrigation is kept up, the result is wonderful. Oh, to have one's soul watered by the Holy Spirit uniformly: every part of the garden having its own stream; plentifully: a sufficient refreshment coming to every tree and herb, however thirsty by nature it might be; continually: each hour bringing not only its heat, but its refreshment; and wisely: each plant receiving just what it needs. In a garden, you can see where the water flows by the lush green vegetation, and you can soon tell when the Spirit of God comes.

*O Lord, water me this day, and cause me to yield
You a full reward for Jesus' sake. Amen.*

August 30

Solace, Security, Satisfaction

Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. (2 Samuel 23:5 KJV)

*T*his is not one promise as much as it is a collection of promises – a box of pearls. The covenant is the ark that contains all things.

These are the last words of David, but they can be mine today. This is a sigh of sadness: things are not with me and mine as I had hoped. There are trials, cares, and sins. These make the pillow hard.

This is consolation: He hath made with me an everlasting covenant. God has pledged Himself to me, and He has sealed the agreement with the blood of Jesus. I am pledged to my God, and my God to me.

This brings into prominence a sense of security since this covenant is everlasting, well ordered, and sure. There is nothing to fear from the lapse of time, the failure of some forgotten point, or the natural uncertainty of things. The covenant is a rocky foundation to build on for life or for death.


David feels satisfaction; he desires nothing more for salvation or satisfaction. He is delivered, and he is delighted. The covenant is all that anyone can desire.

Turn today to your Lord Jesus, whom the great Lord has given to be a covenant to the people. Take Him to be your all in all.

August 31

Divine, Ever-Living, and Unchanging

"The word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you. (1 Peter 1:25)

 All human teaching and all human beings will indeed pass away as the grass of the meadow, but in this verse we are assured that the Word of the Lord is of a very different character, for it will endure forever.

We have here a divine gospel, for what word can endure forever but that which is spoken by the eternal God?

We have here an ever-living gospel, as full of life as when it first came from the lips of God. It is as strong to convince and convert, to regenerate and comfort, and to sustain and sanctify as ever it was in its first days of working wonders.

We have an unchanging gospel that is not green grass today and dry hay tomorrow, but is always the abiding truth of the immutable God. Opinions change, but truth certified by God can no more change than the God who uttered it.

Here, then, we have a gospel to rejoice in, a word of the Lord upon which we can lean all our weight. *Forever* includes life, death, judgment, and eternity. Glory be to God in Christ Jesus for everlasting consolation. Feed on the Word today and all the days of Your life.

September

September 1

Abiding in Obedience and in Love

*If you keep My commandments, you will
abide in My love. (John 15:10)*

Abiding in obedience and abiding in the love of Jesus cannot be separated. Only a life under the control of Christ can prove that we are the objects of our Lord's delight. We must keep our Lord's command if we want to bask in His love. If we live in sin, we cannot live in the love of Christ. Without the holiness that pleases God, we cannot please Jesus (Hebrews 12:14). He who does not care about holiness knows nothing of the love of Jesus.

Conscious enjoyment of our Lord's love is a delicate thing. It is far more sensitive to sin and holiness than mercury is to cold and heat. When we are tender of heart and careful in thought, lip, and life to honor our Lord Jesus, then we receive indications of His love without number. If we desire to continue in such blessedness, we must continue in holiness. The Lord Jesus will not hide His face from us unless we hide our face from Him. Sin makes the cloud that darkens our sun. If we will be carefully obedient and completely consecrated, we can walk in the light, as God is in the light (1 John 1:7), and we can as certainly abide in the love of Jesus as Jesus abides in the love of the Father. This is a sweet promise with a solemn *if*.

*Lord, let me have this "if" in my hand,
for it is as a key to open this box.*

September 2

Follow to Know

So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord. (Hosea 6:3)

*N*ot all at once, but by degrees will we attain to holy knowledge. Our business is to persevere and learn by little and little. We do not need to despair, even though our progress might be slow, for we will yet know. The Lord, who has become our Teacher, will not give us up, no matter how slow of understanding we might be, for it is not for His honor that any degree of human folly would be too much for His skill. The Lord delights to make the simple wise (Psalm 19:7).

Our duty is to keep to our main goal and continue on in knowing, not this or that specific doctrine, but the Lord Himself. To know the Lord – this is life eternal. Let us continue in this pursuit, for in this way we will gain complete instruction. By following on to know the Lord, we learn healing after being torn, restoration after being smitten, and life after death. Experience has its perfect work when the heart follows the pathway of the almighty Lord.

Keep close to Jesus. Continue seeking to know God in Jesus, and in this way you will come to the knowledge of Christ, which is the most excellent of all branches of learning. The Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth. Is not this His gracious grace? Rely upon Him to fulfill it.

September 3

Out of Spiritual Death

*Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have
opened your graves and caused you to come up
out of your graves, My people. (Ezekiel 37:13)*

*L*ndeed, it must be so. Those who receive life from the dead are sure to recognize the hand of the Lord in such a resurrection. This is the greatest and most remarkable of all changes that a person can undergo – to be brought out of the grave of spiritual death and made to rejoice in the light and liberty of spiritual life. None could work this but the living God, the Lord and giver of life.

How well I remember when I was lying in the valley full of dry bones, as dry as any of them! Blessed was the day when free and sovereign grace sent the man of God to prophesy upon me (Ezekiel 37:4)! Glory be to God for the stirring that the word of faith caused among the dry bones. More blessed still was that heavenly breath from the four winds that made me live! Now I know the life-giving Spirit of the ever-living God. Truly He is the living God, for He made me live. My new life, even in its weakness and sorrows, is clear proof to me that the Lord can kill and make alive (Deuteronomy 32:39). He is the only God. He is all that is great, gracious, and glorious, and my awakened soul adores Him as the great I Am. All glory be unto His sacred name! As long as I live, I will praise Him.

September 4

Victory without Battle

I will have compassion on the house of Judah and deliver them by the Lord their God, and will not deliver them by bow, sword, battle, horses, or horsemen. (Hosea 1:7)

This is a precious word. The Lord Himself will deliver His people in the greatness of His mercy, but He will not do it by the ordinary means. People are slow to give God the glory due unto His name. If they go to battle with sword and bow and win the victory, they should praise God, but they do not. Instead, they begin to magnify their own right arm and glory in their horses and horsemen. For this reason, God often determines to save His people without secondary means so that all the honor will be to Himself alone.

Look, then, to the Lord alone and not to man. Expect to see God all the more clearly when there is no one else to look to. If I have no friend, no adviser, and no one at my back, let me be no less confident if I know that the Lord Himself is on my side. Yes, let me be glad if He gives victory without battle, as the text seems to imply. Why do I ask for horses and horsemen if the Lord Himself has mercy upon me and lifts up His arm for my defense? Why do I need a bow or sword if God will save? Let me trust and not be afraid from this day forth and forevermore. Amen.

September 5

With Me Wherever I Am

The Lord is with you. (2 Chronicles 20:17)

*T*his was a great mercy for Jehoshaphat, for a great multitude had come out against him. It will be a great mercy for me, too, for I have great need, and I have no might or wisdom. If the Lord is with me, it matters little who will desert me. If the Lord is with me, I will conquer in the battle of life, and the greater my trials, the more glorious will be my victory. How can I be sure that the Lord is with me?

It is certain that He is with me if I am with Him. If I trust in His faithfulness, believe His words, and obey His commands, He is assuredly with me. If I am on Satan's side, God is against me and cannot be otherwise; but if I live to honor God, I can be sure that He will honor me.

I am quite sure that God is with me if Jesus is my one and only Savior. If I have placed my soul in the hands of God's only begotten Son, I can be sure that the Father will put forth all His power to preserve me so that His Son will not be dishonored.

Oh, for faith to take hold upon the short but sweet text for today!

*O Lord, fulfill this word to Your servant! Be with me
in the house, in the street, in the field, in the shop,
in company, and alone. Be with all Your people.*

September 6

A Strong Heart

*Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take
courage; yes, wait for the Lord. (Psalm 27:14)*

*M*an! Wait! Let your waiting be on the Lord! He is worth waiting for. He never disappoints the waiting soul. While waiting, keep up your spirits. Expect a great deliverance, and be ready to praise God for it.

God will strengthen your heart. This promise goes right to where you need help. If the heart is healthy, all the rest of the system will work well. The heart wants calming and encouragement, and both of these will come if it is strengthened. A forceful heart rests and rejoices and pulses force into the whole person.

No one else can get at that secret vessel of life, the heart, so as to pour strength into it. He alone who made it can make it strong. God is full of strength, and therefore He can impart it to those who need it. Be brave, for the Lord will impart His strength to you, and you will be calm in the storm and glad in sorrow.

I can write as David did: Yes, wait for the Lord. I do indeed say it. I know by long and deep experience that it is good for me to wait upon the Lord.

September 7

The Reach of Almighty Grace

In the place where it is said to them, "You are not My people," it will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God." (Hosea 1:10)

Sovereign grace can turn strangers into sons, and in this verse the Lord declares His intent to deal this way with rebels and make them know what He has done. Beloved reader, the Lord has done this in my case; has He done the same for you? Then let us join our hands and hearts in praising His wonderful name.

Some of us were so clearly ungodly that the Lord's Word most truly said to our conscience and heart, *You are not My people*. In the house of God and in our own homes, when we read the Bible, the voice of God's Spirit said in our soul, "You are not My people." It was truly a sad, condemning voice.

But now, in the same places, from the same ministry and Scripture, we hear a voice that says, *You are the sons of the living God*. Can we be grateful enough for this? Is it not wonderful? Does it not give us hope for others? Who is beyond the reach of God's almighty grace? How can we consider anyone's case hopeless since the Lord has brought about such a marvelous change in us?

He who has kept this one great promise will keep every other promise. Therefore, let us go forward with songs of love, devotion, and trust.

September 8

Broken and Smoking

A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish. (Isaiah 42:3)

I can certainly expect to receive tender treatment from my Lord. Indeed, I feel myself to be at best as weak, as bending, and as worthless as a reed. Someone said, "I don't care at all for you," and the comment, though unkind, was not untrue. Sadly, I am worse than a reed that grows by the river, for at least the reed can hold up its head. I am bruised – very badly bruised. There is no music in me now. There is a break that lets out all the melody. What a sad condition I am in! Yet Jesus will not break me, and if He will not, then I do not much care what others might try to do. *O sweet and compassionate Lord, I burrow down beneath Your protection and forget my bruises!*

It is also fitting to compare me to the dimly burning wick. Its light is gone, and only its smoke remains. I am afraid that I am a nuisance rather than a benefit. My fears tell me that the devil has blown out my light and has left me to be as an obnoxious smoke, and that my Lord will soon put an extinguisher on the dim flame on my wick.

Yet I understand that even though under the law there were snuffers to extinguish the flame, Jesus will not extinguish my flame; therefore, I am hopeful.

Lord, kindle me anew and cause me to shine forth for Your glory and to joyously proclaim Your tenderness.

September 9

Fear Has Its Place

How blessed is the man who fears always. (Proverbs 28:14)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning and the foundation of all true religion. Without a solemn awe and reverence of God, there is no footing for the virtues that shine more brightly. He whose soul does not worship will never live in holiness.

He who has a jealous fear of doing wrong is happy. Holy fear does not just look before it leaps, but it looks even before it moves. It is afraid of not doing what is right, afraid of neglecting duty, and afraid of committing sin. It fears bad company, improper conversation, and questionable actions. This does not make a person miserable, but it brings him happiness. The watchful sentinel is happier than the soldier who sleeps at his post. He who anticipates evil and escapes it is happier than he who walks carelessly on and is destroyed.

The fear of God is a quiet grace that leads a person along a fine road, of which it is written, *No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it* (Isaiah 35:9). A fear of the very appearance of evil is a purifying principle that enables a person, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to keep his garments unspotted from the world' (James 1:27). Solomon had tried both worldliness and holy fear: in the one he found emptiness, and in the other he found happiness. Let us not repeat his trial, but abide by his verdict.

September 10

Coming In; Going Out

Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. (Deuteronomy 28:6)

*T*he blessings of the law are not canceled. Jesus confirmed the promise when He bore the penalty. If I keep the commands of my Lord, I can appropriate this promise without question.

I will enter my house today without being afraid of bad news, and I will enter my place of prayer expecting to hear good news from my Lord. I will not be afraid to examine my own soul, nor to examine my own business. I have a good deal of work to do inside, within my own soul. Oh, for a blessing upon it all, the blessing of the Lord Jesus, who has promised to abide with me.

I must also go out. Timidity makes me wish that I could stay indoors and never go into the sinful world again. But I have duties and responsibilities given to me by God, and I must go out so that I can be helpful to my brethren and useful to the ungodly. I must be a defender of the faith and an opponent of evil. Oh, for a blessing upon my going out this day!

Lord, let me go where You lead. Let me go on Your errands, under Your command, and in the power of Your Spirit. Lord Jesus, come in with me and be my guest, and then walk out with me and cause my heart to burn while You speak with me along the way.

September 11

Sufferers Make Strong Believers

It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth. (Lamentations 3:27)

*T*his is as good as a promise. It has been good, it is still good, and it will continue to be good for me to bear the yoke.

Early in life I had to feel the weight of conviction, and ever since then it has proved to be a soul-enriching burden. Would I have loved the gospel so much if I had not learned by deep experience the need of salvation by grace? Jabez was more honorable than his brethren because his mother gave birth to him in pain and sorrow (1 Chronicles 4:9), and those who suffer much in being born unto God become strong believers in sovereign grace.

The yoke of censure is an displeasing one, but it prepares us for future honor. He is not fit to be a leader who has not run the gauntlet of contempt. Praise intoxicates if it is not preceded by insult and condemnation. People who rise to eminence without struggle usually fall into dishonor.

By no means do we go out and try to find the yoke of affliction, disappointment, and excessive labor, but when the Lord lays it upon us in our youth, it frequently results in a character that glorifies God and blesses the church.

Come and bow your neck. Take up your cross. It was good for you when you were young, and it will not harm you now. For Jesus' sake, bear it carefully.

September 12

What of My House?

*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved,
you and your household. (Acts 16:31)*

*T*his gospel that is for a man with a sword at his throat is the gospel for me. This would suit me if I were dying, and it is all that I need while I am living. I look away from self, sin, and all idea of personal merit, and I trust the Lord Jesus as the Savior whom God has given. I believe in Him, I rest on Him, and I accept Him to be my all in all.

Lord, I am saved, and I will be saved to all eternity, for I believe in Jesus. Lord, blessed be Your name for this. May I daily prove by my life that I am saved from selfishness, worldliness, and every form of evil. But those last words about my household – Lord, I do not want to run away with half a promise when You give a whole one. I plead with You to save all my family. Save the nearest and dearest. Convert my children and grandchildren. Be gracious to all who dwell under my roof or work for me. You make this promise to me personally if I believe in the Lord Jesus. I plead with You to do as You have said.

*I would go over in my prayer every day the names of all my brothers and sisters, parents, children, friends, relatives, and employees and give You no rest until that word is fulfilled: *and your household.**

September 13

The Dew of Heaven

His heavens also drop down dew. (Deuteronomy 33:28)

What the dew in the east is to the world of nature, the influence of the Spirit is in the realm of grace. How greatly I need it! Without the Spirit of God, I am dry and withered. I droop, I fade, and I die. How sweetly this dew refreshes me! When I am blessed with this dew from heaven, I feel happy, lively, vigorous, and elevated. I want nothing more. The Holy Spirit brings me life and all that life requires.

Everything else without the dew of the Spirit is less than nothing to me. I hear, I read, I pray, I sing, and I go to the table of Communion, and I find no blessing there until the Holy Spirit visits me. But when He sends the dew of heaven to me, every means of grace is sweet and profitable.

What a promise this is for me! His heavens also drop down dew. I will be visited with grace. I will not be left to my natural drought, to the world's burning heat, or to the dust storm of satanic temptation. Oh, that I may at this very hour feel the gentle, silent, saturating dew of the Lord! Why should I not? He who has made me to live as the grass lives in the field will treat me as He treats the grass – He will refresh me from above. Grass cannot call for dew as I am able to do. Surely the Lord who visits the prayerless plant will answer His pleading child.

September 14

Mark of Divine Approval

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (James 1:12)

Yes, he is blessed while he is enduring the trial. No eye can see this until he has been anointed with heavenly eye salve, but he must endure the trial without rebelling against God or turning aside from his integrity. He who has gone through the fire and has not been consumed as a counterfeit is truly blessed.

When the test is over, then comes the hallmark of divine approval – the crown of life. It is as if the Lord said, “Let him live; he has been weighed in the balances, and he has not been found to be lacking” (Daniel 5:27). Life is the reward. This does not mean to simply exist, but to have a holy, happy, and true existence and the realization of the divine purpose concerning us. Already a higher form of spiritual life and enjoyment crowns those who have safely passed through the fiercest trials of faith and love.

The Lord has promised the crown of life to those who love Him. Only those who love the Lord will faithfully endure in the hour of trial. Everyone else will either mope and complain or will slip back to the world.

What about you? Do you love Your Lord? Do you love Him truly? Deeply? Wholly? Then that love may be tested, but many waters cannot quench love, nor will rivers overflow it (Song of Solomon 8:7).

[Lord, let Your love nourish mine to the end.

September 15

The Safest Shelter

*A man shall be as an hiding place from the wind,
and a covert from the tempest. (Isaiah 32:2 KJV)*

*W*e all know who this man is. Who could He be but the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, the man of sorrows, the Son of Man? What a hiding place He has been to His people! He bears the full force of the wind Himself, and so He shelters those who hide themselves in Him. We have escaped the wrath of God in Christ Jesus, and we will escape the anger of men, the cares of this life, and the dread of death in this same way. Why do we stand in the wind when we can so easily and so certainly get out of it by hiding behind our Lord? Let us run to Him today and be at peace.

The common wind of trouble often intensifies in force and becomes a fierce storm, sweeping everything before it. Things that looked firm and stable shake in the blast, and many of the worldly things we have placed our trust in fall flat. Our Lord Jesus, the glorious man, is a shelter that is never blown down. In Him we observe the storm sweeping by, but we ourselves rest in delightful peace. Let us today place ourselves in our hiding place and sit and sing under the protection of our Shelter.

*Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! How we love You! And well
we may, for You are to us a shelter in the time of storm.*

September 16

Reward Is Certain

Whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. (Matthew 10:42)

Well, I can do that. I can do a kind act toward the Lord's servant. The Lord knows I love them all and would consider it an honor to wash their feet. For the sake of their Master, I love the disciples.

How gracious of the Lord to mention an action that seems so insignificant – to give even a cup of cold water to drink! I can do this, no matter how poor I am. I can do this, no matter what class of society I am in. I will do this quite cheerfully, too. This act seems so little, yet the Lord notices when it is done even to the least of His followers. Evidently it is not the cost, the skill, or the quantity that He looks at, but the motive. That which we do to a disciple, because he is a disciple, his Lord observes and rewards. He does not reward us for the merit of what we do, but according to the riches of His grace.

I give a cup of cold water, and He allows me to drink of living water. I give to one of His little ones, and He treats me as one of His own children. Jesus finds a reason for His generosity in that which His grace has led me to do, and He says, *He shall not lose his reward.*

September 17

Like Palm and Cedar

*The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, he
will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. (Psalm 92:12)*

These trees are not cared for and pruned by man. Palm trees and cedars are *trees of the Lord* (Psalm 104:16), and it is by His care that they flourish. It is the same way with the saints of the Lord. They are under His own care. These trees are evergreen and are beautiful objects at all seasons of the year. Believers are not sometimes holy and sometimes ungodly, but they stand in the beauty of the Lord in all weather. These trees are impressive everywhere. No one can gaze upon a landscape in which there are either palm trees or cedars without his attention being fixed upon these royal growths. The followers of Jesus are the most observed of all people. Like a city set on a hill, they cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14).

The child of God flourishes like a palm tree, which pushes all its strength upward in one upright column without a single branch. It is a pillar with a glorious pinnacle. It has no growth to the right or to the left, but sends all its force heavenward and bears its fruit as near the sky as possible. Lord, make this true of me.

The cedar braves all storms and grows near the eternal snows, for the Lord Himself fills it with a sap that keeps its heart warm and its limbs strong.

Lord, let this be true of me, I pray. Amen.

September 18

Complete Safety

Of Benjamin he said, "May the beloved of the Lord dwell in security by Him, who shields him all the day, and he dwells between His shoulders." (Deuteronomy 33:12)

*T*here is no safety like that which comes from dwelling close to God. The Lord can find no securer or safer place for His beloved people.

O Lord, let me always abide under Your shadow, close to Your wounded side. I want to be nearer and nearer to You, my Lord; and when I am especially near You, I want to abide there forever.

What a covering the Lord gives to His chosen! It is not just a decent roof that will cover him, nor a bombproof covering, nor even an angel's wing, but it is the Lord Himself. Nothing can come at us when we are covered in this way. The Lord will grant us this covering all day long, no matter how long the day is.

Lord, let me consciously abide today beneath this canopy of love, this pavilion of sovereign power.

Does the third clause mean that the Lord in His temple will dwell among the mountains of Benjamin, that the Lord will be wherever Benjamin must carry out his responsibilities, or does it mean that we are carried upon the shoulders of the Eternal? In any case, the Lord is the support and strength of His saints.

*Lord, let me always have Your help, and then
my armaments will be sufficient for me.*

September 19

The Reason for Singing

The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. (Zephaniah 3:17)

*W*hat a wonderful verse this is! The Lord God is in the center of His people in all the majesty of His power! This presence alone is enough to inspire us with peace and hope. Treasures of limitless might are stored in our God, and He dwells in His church; therefore His people can shout for joy.

Not only do we have His presence, but He will save us. He is always saving. He takes His name of Jesus from it, for His name means "to save." Let us not fear any danger, for He is mighty to save.

This is not all. God abides forevermore the same. He saves, He finds rest in loving, and He will never stop loving. His love gives Him joy. He even finds a theme for a song, *shouts of joy*, in His beloved. This is exceedingly wonderful. When God brought about creation, He did not sing, but simply said, *It is very good* (Genesis 1:31); but when He came to redemption, then God felt a joy to be expressed in song.

Think of it, and be amazed! Jesus sings a marriage song over His chosen bride. She is to Him His love, His joy, His rest, and His song.

*O Lord Jesus, by Your immeasurable love to
us, teach us to love You, to rejoice in You,
and to sing unto You our song of life.*

September 20

Perfect Willingness

*Your people will volunteer freely in the
day of Your power. (Psalm 110:3)*

Blessed be the God of grace that this is so! He has a people whom He has chosen from of old to be His special portion. These people by nature have wills as stubborn as the rest of the contrary children of Adam, but when the day of His power comes and grace displays its omnipotence, they become willing to repent and to believe in Jesus. None are saved unwillingly, but the will is sweetly made to yield itself. What a wondrous power this is that never violates the will, and yet rules it! God does not break the lock, but He opens it by a master key that He alone can handle.

We are now willing to be, to do, or to suffer as the Lord wills. If at any time we grow rebellious, He only has to come to us with power, and we immediately return to the way of His commands with all our hearts. May this be a day of power with me as to some noble effort for the glory of God and the good of my fellowmen!

Lord, I am willing. I have hope that this will be a day of Your power. I am completely at Your disposal. I am willing and eager to be used of You for Your holy purposes. O Lord, let me not have to cry that *the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not* [Romans 7:18], but give me the power as You give me the will.

September 21

Let Trials Bless

*Knowing that tribulation brings about
perseverance. (Romans 5:3)*

*T*his is a promise in substance if not in form. We have need of patience, and here we see the way of getting it. It is only by enduring that we learn to endure, just as people learn to swim only by swimming. You could not learn to swim if you stay on dry land, nor can you learn patience without trouble. Is it not worthwhile to suffer tribulation for the sake of gaining that beautiful calmness of mind that quietly accepts the complete will of God?

Yet this verse sets forth one remarkable fact, which is not according to nature, but is supernatural. Tribulation in and of itself produces impatience, unbelief, and rebellion. It is only by the sacred transformation of grace that it is made to produce perseverance, or patience, in us. We do not thresh the wheat to settle the dust, yet the flail of tribulation does this upon God's floor. We do not toss a man about in order to give him rest, and yet this is how the Lord deals with His children. Truly this is not the manner of man, but greatly points to the glory of our all-wise God.

Oh, for grace to let my trials bless me! Why would I want to stop their gracious working in my life?

*Lord, I ask You to remove my affliction, but I plead
with You ten times more to remove my impatience.*

*Precious Lord Jesus, with Your cross, engrave
the image of Your patience on my heart.*

September 22

Broad Rivers without Galleys

But there the majestic One, the Lord, will be for us a place of rivers and wide canals on which no boat with oars will go, and on which no mighty ship will pass. (Isaiah 33:21)

The Lord will be to us the greatest good without any of the drawbacks that necessarily seem to accompany the best earthly things. If a city is favored with wide rivers, it is prone to be attacked by ships with oars and other ships of war. But when the Lord represents the abundance of His generosity under this example, He takes explicit care to shut out the fear that the metaphor might suggest. Blessed be His perfect love!

Lord, if You send me wealth like broad rivers, do not let the galley with oars come up in the shape of worldliness or pride. If You grant me abundant health and a happy outlook, do not let the gallant ship of carnal ease come sailing up the flowing flood. If I have success in holy service as broad as the German Rhine, let me never find the ship of self-conceit and self-confidence floating on the waves of my usefulness. If I would be so supremely happy as to enjoy the light of Your countenance year after year, let me never despise Your feeble saints nor allow the vain notion of my own perfection to sail up the broad rivers of my full assurance. Lord, give me that blessing that makes rich and neither adds sorrow nor aids sin.

September 23

Deliverance from Dust and Chaff

For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground. (Amos 9:9)

The sifting process is still going on. Wherever we go, we are still being winnowed and sifted. In all countries, God's people are being tried *as grain is shaken in a sieve*. Sometimes the devil holds the sieve and tosses us up and down at a fast rate, with the earnest desire to get rid of us forever. Unbelief is quick to trouble our hearts and minds with its restless fears. The world lends a willing hand at the same process and shakes us to the right and to the left with great vigor. Worst of all, the church, as largely apostate as it is, comes in to give a more furious force to the sifting process.

Well – let it continue! This is how the chaff is severed from the wheat. This is how the wheat is delivered from dust and chaff. How great is the mercy that comes to us in the text: but not a kernel will fall to the ground! All that is good, true, and gracious will be preserved. Not one of the least of believers will lose anything worth calling a loss. We will be so well taken care of in the sifting that it will be a real gain to us through Christ Jesus.

September 24

The Life-Giving Stream

It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. (Ezekiel 47:9)

*I*n the prophet's vision, the living waters flowed into the Dead Sea and carried life with them, even into that stagnant lake. Where grace goes, spiritual life is the immediate and everlasting consequence. Grace proceeds sovereignly according to the will of God, even as a river in all its windings follows its own sweet will. Wherever grace comes, it does not wait for life to come to it, but it creates life by its own life-giving flow.

Oh, that it would pour along our streets and flood our cities! Oh, that it would now come into my house and rise until every room were made to swim with it!

Lord, let the living water flow to my family and my friends, and let it not pass me by. I hope I have drunk of it already, but I desire to bathe in it and to swim in it. O my Savior, I need life more abundantly. Come to me, I pray, until every part of my nature is passionately energetic and intensely active. Living God, I pray that you would fill me with Your own life. I am a poor, dry stick; come and make me to live so that, like Aaron's rod, I will bud and blossom and bring forth fruit unto Your glory. Revive me, for the sake of my Lord Jesus. Amen.

September 25

The Sacrifice Has Been Accepted

If the Lord had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these things. (Judges 13:23)

This is a sort of promise deduced by logic. It is an inference properly drawn from determined facts. It was not likely that the Lord had revealed to Manoah and his wife that a son would be born to them if He had it in His heart to destroy them. The wife reasoned well, and we will do well if we follow her line of argument.

The Father has accepted the great sacrifice of Calvary and has declared Himself well pleased with it; how can He now be pleased to kill us! Why would there be a substitute if the sinner still had to perish? The accepted sacrifice of Jesus puts an end to fear.

The Lord has shown us our election, our adoption, our union to Christ, and our marriage to the Well-beloved; how can He now destroy us? The promises are loaded with blessings, which necessitate our being preserved unto eternal life. It is not possible for the Lord to cast us away and still fulfill His covenant. The past assures us, and the future reassures us. We will not die, but live – for we have seen Jesus, and in Him we have seen the Father by the light of the Holy Spirit. Because of this life-giving sight, we must live forever.

September 26

Among the Redeemed

Behold, a people who dwells apart, and will not be reckoned among the nations. (Numbers 23:9)

*N*o one would want to dwell among the nations and to be numbered with them? Why, even the professing church is such that to follow the Lord fully within its bounds is very difficult. There is such a mingling and mixing that one often sighs for “a lodge in some vast wilderness.”¹³

It is certain that the Lord wants His people to follow a separated path as to the world and to come out decidedly and distinctly from it. We are set apart by the divine decree, purchase, and calling, and our inward experience has made us to greatly differ from people of the world. Therefore, our place is not in their Vanity Fair, nor in their City of Destruction,¹⁴ but in the narrow way where all true pilgrims must follow their Lord.

This might not only cause us to accept the world’s cold shoulder and ridicule, but it might even cause us to accept them with pleasure as being a part of our covenant portion. Our names are not in the same book as those of the world, we are not of the same ancestry, we are not headed for the same place, and we are not trusting in the same guide; therefore, it is good that we are not numbered with them. Let us be found in the number of the redeemed, and we will be content to be apart and solitary to the end of our days.

13 This is likely a line from William Cowper’s poem “Slavery,” which Cowper might have based upon Jeremiah 9:2 (KJV): *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place.*

14 Vanity Fair and the City of Destruction are references found in John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

September 27

The Divine Light in Darkness

For You light my lamp. (Psalm 18:28)

*I*t might be that my soul sits in darkness. If this is a spiritual darkness, then no human power can bring me light. Blessed be God! He can enlighten my darkness and at once light my candle. Even though I may be surrounded by *a darkness which may be felt* (Exodus 10:21), yet He can break the gloom and immediately make it bright around me.

The mercy is that if God lights the candle, no one can blow it out, and it cannot burn itself out. The lights that the Lord kindled in the beginning are still shining. The Lord's lamps may need trimmed at times, but He does not put them out.

Let me, then, like the nightingale, sing in the dark. Expectation will furnish me with music, and hope will pitch the tune. Soon I will rejoice in a candle of God's lighting. Maybe I am dull and dreary right now. It might be the weather, or bodily weakness, or the surprise of a sudden trouble – but whatever has made the darkness, it is God alone who will bring the light. My eyes look unto Him alone. I will soon have the candles of the Lord shining around me. Soon enough, too, in His own good time, I will be where we need no candle, nor the light of the sun (Revelation 22:5). Hallelujah!

September 28

The Work is Done; Rest in Him

*There remains a Sabbath rest for the
people of God. (Hebrews 4:9)*

God has provided a Sabbath, and some must enter into it. Those to whom it was first preached did not enter in because of unbelief; therefore, that Sabbath remains for the people of God. David sang of it, but he had to touch the minor key, for Israel refused the rest of God. Joshua could not give it, nor could Canaan produce it. It remains for believers.

Come, then, let us labor to enter into this rest (Hebrews 4:11). Let us quit the weary toil of sin and self. Let us cease from all confidence, even in those works of which it might be said, "They are very good." Do we have any such works? Let us cease from our own works, as God did from His. Now let us find comfort in the finished work of our Lord Jesus. Everything is fully done; justice demands no more. Great peace is our portion in Christ Jesus.

As to providential matters – the work of grace in the soul and the work of the Lord in the souls of others – let us cast these burdens upon the Lord and rest in Him. When the Lord gives us a yoke to bear, He does so that by taking it up we can find rest. By faith, we labor to enter into the rest of God, and we renounce all rest in self-satisfaction or inactivity. Jesus Himself is perfect rest, and we are filled to the brim in Him.

September 29

To Glorify Christ Jesus

*He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine
and will disclose it to you. (John 16:14)*

The Holy Spirit Himself cannot glorify the Lord Jesus in any better way than by showing to us Christ's own things. Jesus is His own best commendation. There is no adorning Him except with His own gold.

The Comforter shows us that which He has received of our Lord Jesus. We never see anything properly until He reveals it. He has a way of opening our minds and of opening the Scriptures, and by this double process He sets forth our Lord to us. There is much art in displaying a matter, and that art belongs in the highest degree to the Spirit of truth. He shows us the things themselves. This is a great privilege, as those know who have enjoyed the holy vision.

Let us seek the light of the Spirit, not to gratify our curiosity, nor even to bring us personal comfort, but to glorify the Lord Jesus. Oh, to have worthy ideas of Him! Low thoughts of our precious Lord dishonor Him. Oh, to have such strong impressions of His person, work, and glory that we will cry out to praise Him with heart and soul! Where there is a heart enriched by the Holy Spirit's teaching, there will be a Savior glorified beyond expression.

*Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly light,
and show us Jesus our Lord!*

September 30

Needs that Open Our Mouths

Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. (Psalm 81:10)

*W*hat an encouragement to pray! Our human thoughts would lead us to ask small things because we deserve nothing big, but the Lord wants us to ask for big blessings. Prayer should be as simple a matter as opening the mouth. It should be a natural, unconstrained utterance. When someone is passionate, he opens his mouth wide, and our text urges us to be fervent in our supplications.

It also means that we can be bold with God and ask many and large blessings at His hands. Read the whole verse, and see the argument: *I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide and I will fill it.* Because the Lord has given us so much, He invites us to ask for more – and to expect more.

See how the little birds in their nests seem to be all mouth when the mother comes to feed them. Let it be the same with us. Let us take in grace at every door. Let us drink it in as a sponge sucks up the water in which it lies. God is ready to fill us if we are only ready to be filled. Let our needs make us open our mouths. Let our weakness cause us to open our mouths and pant. Yes, let our distress make us open our mouths with a child's cry. The opened mouth will be filled by the Lord Himself.

So be it unto us, O Lord, this day.

October

October 1

A Covenant He Remembers

*He has given food to those who fear Him; He will
remember His covenant forever. (Psalm 111:5)*

Those who fear God do not need to fear lacking what is needed. Through all these long years, the Lord has always found food for His own children, whether they have been in the wilderness, by the brook Cherith, in captivity, or in the midst of famine. The Lord has given us our daily bread day by day up to now, and we do not doubt that He will continue to feed us until we need no more.

As to the higher and greater blessings of the covenant of grace, God will never cease to supply them as our situation demands. He is aware that He made the covenant, and He never acts as if He regretted it. He knows when we provoke Him to destroy us, and He is willing to love us, keep us, and comfort us, even as He promised to do. He is aware of every dotted *i* and crossed *t* of His promises, never allowing one of His words to fall to the ground.

We are sadly unmindful of our God, but He is graciously mindful of us. He cannot forget His Son, who is the pledge of the covenant, nor His Holy Spirit, who actively carries out the covenant, nor His own honor, which is bound up with the covenant. Therefore, the foundation of God stands firm, and no believer will lose his divine inheritance, which is his by a covenant of salt (Numbers 18:19).

October 2

Comfort on the Way Home

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." (Genesis 50:24)

Joseph had been a sort of human embodiment of the protective hand of God to his brethren. All our Josephs die, and a thousand comforts die with them. Egypt was never the same to Israel after Joseph was dead, nor can the world again be to some of us what it was when our beloved ones were alive.

But see how the pain of that sad death was alleviated! The people of Israel had a promise that the living God would visit them. A visit from the Lord! What a favor! What a consolation! What a heaven below! *O Lord, visit us today, even though we are not worthy that You should come under our roof.*

But more was promised: the Lord would bring them out. They would find in Egypt a cold welcome when Joseph was dead. It would become to them a house of bondage, but it was not to be this way forever. They would come out of it by a divine deliverance and would march to the land of promise. We will not weep here forever. We will be called home to heaven to join our dear ones. Therefore comfort one another with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

October 3

Reflections of the Lord's Beauty

As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake. (Psalm 17:15)

Most people try to possess that which fills their bodies and enriches their children, but that which the believer desires is of another type. The people of the world have their treasure in this world, but the people who are of the world to come look higher and farther.

Our possession is twofold. We have God's presence here, and we have His likeness hereafter. Here we behold the face of the Lord in righteousness, for we are justified in Christ Jesus. Oh, the joy of beholding the face of a reconciled God! The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ gives us heaven below, and it will be the heaven of heavens to us above.

Seeing does not end it, though, for we are to be changed into that which we gaze upon. We will sleep for a while, and then we will wake up to find ourselves as mirrors that reflect the beauty of our Lord. Faith sees God with a transforming look. The heart receives the image of Jesus into its own depths, until the character of Jesus is imprinted on the soul. This is satisfaction. To see God and to be like Him – what more can I desire? David's assured confidence here is made by the Holy Spirit to be the Lord's promise. I believe it. I expect it.

Lord, grant it, I pray. Amen.

October 4

The Mighty Magnet

*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will
draw all men to Myself. (John 12:32)*

*C*ome, you workers for Christ, and be encouraged. You are afraid that you cannot draw a congregation. Try preaching of a crucified, risen, and ascended Savior, for this is the greatest “draw” that was ever yet manifested among men. What drew you to Christ except Christ? What draws you to Him now except His own blessed self? If you have been drawn to the Christian religion by anything else, you will soon be drawn away from it, but Jesus has held you and will hold you even to the end. Why, then, doubt His power to draw others? Go with the name of Jesus to those who have been stubborn in the past, and see if it does not draw them.

No sort of person is beyond this drawing power. Old and young, rich and poor, ignorant and learned, corrupt or kind – all people will feel the attractive force. Jesus is the one magnet. Let us not think of any other. Music will not draw people to Jesus, and neither will eloquence, logic, ceremonies, or amusement. Jesus Himself must draw people to Himself, and Jesus is quite equal to the work in every case. Do not be tempted by the popular methods and claims of the day, but as workers for the Lord, work in His own way – and draw people with the Lord’s own cords. Draw people *to* Christ, and draw people *by* Christ, for then Christ will use you to draw them.

October 5

At God's Bidding

Then the remnant of Jacob will be among many peoples like dew from the Lord, like showers on vegetation which do not wait for man or delay for the sons of men. (Micah 5:7)

*I*f this is true of the literal Israel, it is much more true of the spiritual Israel – the believing people of God. When saints are what they should be, they are an immeasurable blessing to those among whom they are scattered.

They are as the dew, for in a quiet, unobtrusive manner they refresh those around them. Silently but effectively, they minister to the life, growth, and joy of those who dwell with them. Coming fresh from heaven, glistening like diamonds in the sun, gracious men and women attend to the feeble and seemingly insignificant until each blade of grass has its own drop of dew. As little as they are as individuals, when united, they are more than sufficient for the purposes of love that the Lord fulfills through them. Drops of dew can refresh many acres. Lord, make us like the dew!

Godly people are as showers that come at God's command without man's permission and authority. They work for God whether people desire it or not. They no more ask for human permission than the rain does.

Lord, make us just as boldly prompt and free in Your service wherever you have us and in whatever you want us to do.

October 6

The Leadership of Our Guide

*When He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will
guide you into all the truth. (John 16:13)*

Truth is like a vast cavern into which we desire to enter, but which we are not able to travel alone. It is clear and bright at the entrance, but if we want to go farther and explore its innermost recesses, we must have a guide or we will get lost. The Holy Spirit, who knows all truth perfectly, is the appointed guide of all true believers. He conducts them as they are able to bear it, from one inner chamber to another, so that they behold the deep things of God and His secret is made plain to them.

What a promise this is for the humbly inquiring mind! We desire to know the truth and to enter into it. We are aware of our own aptness to do wrong, and we feel the urgent need of a guide. We rejoice that the Holy Spirit is come and abides among us. He humbles Himself to act as a guide to us, and we gladly accept His leadership. We want to learn *all truth* so that we will not be one-sided and out of balance. We do not want to be willingly ignorant of any part of God's revelation so that we do not miss any blessing or fall into any sin. The Spirit of God has come that He may guide us into all truth. Let us hear His words with obedient hearts and follow His leading.

October 7

Always First in Fellowship

He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you. (Mark 16:7)

Where Jesus said He would meet His disciples, there He would be. Jesus keeps His word. If He promises to meet us at the mercy seat, or in public worship, or in the ordinances, we can depend upon it that He will be there. We might wickedly stay away from the appointed meeting place, but He never does. He says, Where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst (Matthew 18:20). He does not say, "I will be there," but "I am there already."

Jesus is always first in fellowship: *He is going ahead of you*. His heart is with His people. His delight is in them. He is never hesitant to meet them. In all fellowship, He goes before us, but He reveals Himself to those who come after Him: There you will see Him.

What a joyful sight! We do not care to see the greatest of mere humans, but to see Jesus is to be filled with joy and peace. And we will see Him, for He promises Himself to His people. Rest assured that it will be so, for He does everything according to His word of promise: *just as He told you*. Hold on to those last words, and be assured that He will always do for you *just as He told you*.

October 8

Never Alone

It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken." (Isaiah 62:4)

*F*orsaken is a dreary word. It sounds like a bell ringing at a funeral. It is the record of sharpest sorrows and the prophecy of the most dreadful difficulties. An abyss of misery yawns in that word *forsaken*: Forsaken by one who pledges his honor! Forsaken by a friend so long tried and trusted! Forsaken by a dear relative! Forsaken by father and mother! Forsaken by all!

This is misery indeed, yet it can be patiently endured if the Lord will take us up. But what must it feel like to feel forsaken of God? Think of that bitterest of cries: *My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?* (Matthew 27:46). Have we ever in any degree tasted the wormwood and the gall of *forsaken* in that sense (Lamentations 3:19)? If so, let us plead with our Lord to save us from any repetition of such an unspeakable sorrow. Oh, that such darkness may never return! People wanting to do evil said of one saint, *God has forsaken him; pursue and seize him* (Psalm 71:11) – but they were wrong. The Lord's loving favor will compel our cruel enemies to eat their own words, or at least to hold their tongues.

The reverse of all this is that superlative word *Hephzibah*: the Lord delights in you (Isaiah 62:4). This turns weeping into dancing (Psalm 30:11). Let those who dreamed that they were forsaken hear the Lord say, *I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you* (Hebrews 13:5).

October 9

What Sanctifies Our Offerings?

*The priest shall also put some of the blood
on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense
which is before the Lord. (Leviticus 4:7)*

The altar of incense is the place where saints present their prayers and praises, and it is delightful to think of it as sprinkled with the blood of the great sacrifice. It is this that makes all our worship acceptable with God: He sees the blood of His own Son and therefore accepts our worship.

It is good for us to fix our eyes upon the blood of the one complete sin offering. Sin mingles even with our holy things, and our best repentance, faith, prayer, and thanksgiving could not be received by God if it were not for the merit of the atoning sacrifice. Many people sneer at *the blood*, but to us it is the foundation of comfort and hope. That which is on the horns of the altar is meant to be prominently before our eyes when we draw near to God. The blood gives strength to prayer, and therefore it is on the altar's horns. It is *before the Lord*, and therefore it should be before us. It is on the altar before we bring the incense; it is there to sanctify our offerings and gifts.

Let us pray with confidence since the Victim is offered, the merit has been pleaded, the blood is within the veil, and the prayers of believers are fragrant unto the Lord.

October 10

Open Door of Communion

*I have put before you an open door which
no one can shut. (Revelation 3:8)*

*S*aints who remain faithful to the truth of God have an open door before them. You have resolved to live and die by that which the Lord has revealed in His Word, and therefore this open door stands before you.

I will enter in by the open door of communion with God. Who will say that I cannot? Jesus has removed my sin and has given me His righteousness; therefore I can freely enter. *Lord, I do so by Your grace.*

I have also before me an open door into the mysteries of the Word. I can enter into the deep things of God. Election, union to Christ, the second coming – all these are before me, and I can enjoy them. No promise and no doctrine are now locked up against me.

An open door of access is before me in private, and an open door of usefulness is before me in public. God will hear me. God will use me. A door is opened for my onward march to the church in heaven, and a door is opened for my daily fellowship with saints below. Some people may try to shut me up or shut me out, but they try in vain.

Soon I will see an open door into heaven. The gate of pearl will be my way of entrance, and then I will go in unto my Lord and King and will be with God, eternally shut in.

October 11

Free to Travel

"And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and in His name they will walk," declares the Lord. (Zechariah 10:12)

This is comfort for sick saints. They have grown faint, and they fear that they will never rise from the bed of doubt and fear; but the Great Physician can both remove the disease and take away the weakness that was a result of the disease. He will strengthen the weak. He will do this in the best possible way, for it will be *in the Lord*. Our strength is far better in God than in self. In the Lord it causes fellowship, but in ourselves it creates pride. In ourselves it would be sadly limited, but in God it knows no limit.

When strength is given, the believer uses it. He walks up and down in the name of the Lord. What an enjoyment it is to walk around after an illness, and what a delight it is to be strong in the Lord after a season of weakness! The Lord gives His people liberty to walk up and down, along with an inward freedom to exercise that liberty. He makes honorable people out of us. We are not slaves who never rest and are not free to travel, but we are free to travel at our ease throughout Immanuel's land.

No longer be sick and downcast, for Jesus calls you to be strong and walk with God in holy contemplation. Obey His word of love.

October 12

The Mark of Covenant Grace

Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. (Deuteronomy 30:6)

We read here of the true circumcision. Notice that the author of it is the Lord your God. He alone can deal effectively with our heart and take away its carnality and impurity. To cause us to love God with all our heart and soul is a miracle of grace that only the Holy Spirit can work. We must look to the Lord alone for this and must never be satisfied with anything less than this.

Notice where this circumcision is performed. It is not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. It is the essential mark of the covenant of grace. Love to God is the imperishable sign of the chosen seed. By this secret seal, the election of grace is certified to the believer. We must be sure that we do not trust in any outward ritual, but are sealed in heart by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Note what the result is: so that you may live. To be carnally minded is death (Romans 8:6). In overcoming the flesh, we find life and peace. If we keep our minds on the things of the Spirit, we will live. Oh, that the Lord our God may complete His gracious work upon our inner natures so that in the fullest and highest sense, we will live unto the Lord.

October 13

If, and a Triple Promise

[If] My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

Even though we are called by the name of the Lord, we nevertheless sin-prone men and women. What a mercy it is that God is ready to forgive! Whenever we sin, let us hurry to the mercy seat of our God, seeking forgiveness.

We are to humble ourselves. Should we not be humbled by the fact that we still sin after receiving so much love? *O Lord, we bow before You in the dust and admit our grievous ingratitude.* Oh, the dishonor of sin! Oh, the sevenfold shame of it in people as favored as we have been!

Next, we are to pray for mercy, for cleansing, and for deliverance from the power of sin. *O Lord, hear us even now, and do not shut out our cry.*

In this prayer, we are to seek the Lord's face. He has left us because of our faults, and we must beg Him to return. *O Lord, look on us in Your Son, Jesus, and smile upon Your servants.* Along with this must be our own turning from evil; God cannot turn to us unless we turn from sin. Then comes the triple promise of hearing, pardon, and healing.

*Our Father, grant us these now, we pray,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake.*

October 14

Never Ashamed

Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32)

What a gracious promise! It is a great joy to me to confess my Lord. Whatever my faults may be, I am not ashamed of Jesus, nor am I afraid to declare the doctrines of His cross. O Lord, I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart, but proclaim it willingly to others.

Sweet is the prospect that the text sets before me! Friends forsake and enemies rejoice, but the Lord does not reject His servant. Undoubtedly my Lord will acknowledge me even here and will give me new signs of His favor.

But there comes a day when I must stand before the great Father. What joy to think that Jesus will confess me then! He will say, "This man truly trusted Me and was willing to be reproached for My name's sake; therefore, I acknowledge him as Mine." The other day a great man was made a knight, and the queen handed him a jeweled armband – but what is that compared to what Jesus will do for us? It will be an honor beyond all honors for the Lord Jesus to confess us in the presence of the divine Majesty in the heavens. Never let me be ashamed to acknowledge my Lord. Never let me display a cowardly silence or allow a weak-willed compromise. Will I be ashamed to acknowledge Him who promises to acknowledge me?

October 15

Sustained by Feeding

*As the living Father sent Me, and I live because
of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also
will live because of Me. (John 6:57)*

We live by virtue of our union with the Son of God. As the God-man and Mediator, the Lord Jesus lives by the self-existent Father who has sent Him, and in the same manner, we live by the Savior who has given us life. He who is the source of our life is also the sustenance of it. Living is sustained by feeding. We must support the spiritual life with spiritual food, and that spiritual food is the Lord Jesus. Not His life, or death, or work, or word alone, but Himself, as including all these. On Jesus Himself we feed.

This is displayed to us in the Lord's Supper, but it is actually enjoyed by us when we meditate upon our Lord, believe in Him with faith, take Him into ourselves by love, and absorb Him by the power of the inner life. We know what it is to feed on Jesus, but we cannot speak it or write it. Our wisest course is to practice it and to do so more and more. We are urged to eat abundantly, and it will be to our infinite profit to do so when Jesus is our meat and our drink.

Lord, I thank You that this, which is a necessity of my new life, is also its greatest delight. So I feed on You at this hour.

October 16

One with Christ Jesus

Because I live, you will live also. (John 14:19)

Jesus has made the life of believers in Him as certain as His own. As sure as the Head lives, the members of the body live also. If Jesus has not risen from the dead, then we are dead in our sins; but since He has risen, all believers are risen in Him. His death has put away our transgressions and has loosed the bonds that held us under the death sentence. His resurrection proves our justification. We are absolved, and mercy says, *The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die* (2 Samuel 12:13).

Jesus has made the life of His people as eternal as His own. How can they die as long as He lives, since they are one with Him? Because He dies no more and death has no more dominion over Him, so they will no more return to the graves of their old sins, but will live unto the Lord in newness of life.

O believer, when you are under great temptation and you fear that you will one day fall by the hand of the enemy, let this reassure you. You will never lose Your spiritual life, for it is *hidden with Christ in God* (Colossians 3:3). You do not doubt the immortality of Your Lord; therefore, do not think that He will let you die, since you are one with Him. The argument for Your life is His life, and you can have no fear of that. Therefore, rest in Your living Lord.

October 17

Holy Fear

*The one who fears the commandment will
be rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13)*

The holy awe of God's Word is not much regarded anymore. People think that they are wiser than the Word of the Lord and sit in judgment upon it. *But I did not do so because of the fear of God* (Nehemiah 5:15). We accept the inspired Book as infallible, and we prove our esteem by our obedience. We are not afraid of the Word, but we have a respectful awe of it. We are not afraid of its penalties because we respect its commands.

This holy fear of the commandment produces the restfulness of humility, which is far sweeter than the recklessness of pride. It becomes a guide to us as we move about. It steadies us when we are going downhill, and it strengthens us when we are climbing it. Preserved from evil and led into righteousness by our reverence of the command, we gain a quiet conscience, which is as a well of wine. It is a sense of freedom from responsibility, which is as life from the dead. It is a confidence of pleasing God, which is heaven below. The ungodly may ridicule our deep reverence for the Word of the Lord, but so what? The prize of our high calling is a sufficient consolation for us. The rewards of obedience make us scorn the scorning of the scorner.

October 18

Tears, Then Joyful Harvest

*Those who sow in tears shall reap with
joyful shouting. (Psalm 126:5)*

Weeping times are suitable for sowing. We do not want the ground to be too dry. Seed soaked in the tears of sincere desire will come up all the sooner. The salt of prayerful tears will give the good seed a flavor that will preserve it from the worm. Truth spoken in sincere earnestness has a double life about it. Instead of stopping our sowing because of our weeping, let us redouble our efforts because the season is so favorable.

Our heavenly seed could not suitably be sown laughing. Deep sorrow and concern for the souls of others are a far more proper accompaniment of godly teaching than anything like levity. We have heard of men who went to war with a light heart, but they were beaten; and it is mostly the same with those who sow spiritual seed in the same way.

Come, then, and sow on in Your weeping, for you have the promise of a joyful harvest. You will reap. You will see some results of Your labor. This will come to you in such abundance as to give you joy, which a poor, withered, and meager harvest would not do. When your eyes are dim with silver tears, think of the golden corn. Bear cheerfully the present toil and disappointment, for the harvest day will be a day of great joy.

October 19

Regulated Chastisement

I will correct thee in measure. (Jeremiah 30:11 KJV)

*I*t would be a fatal sign if we were left uncorrected. It would prove that the Lord had said, “*He is joined to idols; let him alone*” (Hosea 4:17). We pray that this will never be the case with us! Uninterrupted prosperity should cause fear and trembling. God rebukes and chastens those whom He tenderly loves. He allows those for whom He has no esteem to fatten themselves without fear, like bullocks for the slaughter. It is in love that our heavenly Father uses the rod upon His children.

See, too, that the correction is in measure. He gives us love without measure, but He corrects us *in measure*. As under the old law no Israelite could receive more than forty lashes (Deuteronomy 25:3; 2 Corinthians 11:24), which ensured careful counting and limited suffering, so it is with each afflicted member of the household of faith – every stroke is counted. Our chastisement is regulated by the measure of wisdom, the measure of sympathy, and the measure of love. Far be it from us to rebel against appointments so divine.

*Lord, if You stand by to measure the bitter drops
that fall into my cup, then I will cheerfully take
that cup from Your hand and drink according to
Your directions, saying, “Your will be done.”*

October 20

From Every Sin

He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Lord, save me from my sins. By the name of Jesus, I am encouraged to pray this way. Save me from my past sins, that the habit of them may not hold me captive. Save me from my sins of the law, that I may not be the slave of my own weaknesses. Save me from the sins that are continually under my eye, that I may not lose my horror of them. Save me from secret sins – sins that I do not see because of my lack of light. Save me from sudden and surprising sins – do not let me be carried off my feet by a surge of temptation. Save me, Lord, from every sin. Do not let any iniquity have dominion over me.

You alone can do this. I cannot snap my own chains or slay my own enemies. You know temptation, for You were tempted. You know sin, for You did bear the weight of it. You know how to help me in my hour of conflict. You can save me from sinning and save me when I have sinned. It is promised in Your very name that You will do this, and I ask You to let me verify the prophecy today: Jesus will save. Let me not give way to temper, pride, discouragement, or any form of evil, but save me unto holiness of life so that the name of Jesus may be abundantly glorified in me.

October 21

God's Multiplication Table

The smallest one will become a clan, and the least one a mighty nation. I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time. (Isaiah 60:22)

Marks for the Lord often begin on a small scale, and they are no worse off because of this. Feebleness educates faith, brings God near, and wins glory for His name. The mustard seed is among the smallest of seeds, yet it becomes a treelike plant, with branches that lodge the birds of heaven. We might begin with one, and that one might be a little one, yet it will become a clan, or a thousand. The Lord is great at the multiplication table. How often He said to His lone servant, *I will surely multiply you* (e.g., Hebrews 6:14)! Trust in the Lord, you who are ones and twos, for He will be in the midst of you if you are gathered in His name (Matthew 18:20).

The least one. What can be more despicable in the eyes of those who count heads and weigh forces? Yet this is the nucleus of a great nation. Only one star shines out at first in the evening, but soon the sky is crowded with countless lights.

We do not need to think that the possibility of increase is improbable, for the promise is, *I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time*. There will be no premature haste, like that which we see at enthusiastic and emotion-filled meetings. It will be all in due time, yet there will be no delay. When the Lord hurries, His speed is glorious.

October 22

Plead His Own Promise

You, O Lord God, have spoken; and with Your blessing may the house of Your servant be blessed forever. (2 Samuel 7:29)

This is a promise pleaded, and so it provides double instruction to us. We should receive anything that the Lord God has spoken as certain and true, and then we should plead it at the throne. Oh, how sweet to quote what our own God has spoken! How precious to use a “therefore,” which the promise suggests, as David does in this verse! Now therefore, may it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You. For You, O Lord God, have spoken; and with Your blessing may the house of Your servant be blessed forever.

We do not pray because we doubt, but because we believe. To pray unbelievably is not appropriate for the Lord’s children. *No, Lord, we cannot doubt You.* We are convinced that every word of Yours is a firm foundation for the boldest expectation. We come to You and say, “Do as You have said.” Bless Your servant’s house. Heal our sick. Save those who are hesitant. Restore those who wander. Strengthen those who live in Your fear. Lord, give us food and raiment according to Your Word. Bless our undertakings. Especially bless our endeavors to make known Your gospel in our neighborhood. Make our servants Your servants, and our children Your children. Let the blessing flow on to future generations. As long as any of the human race remains on earth, may they remain true to You. O Lord God, let the house of Your servant be blessed.

October 27

Harvest of Light, Gladness

Light is sown like seed for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart. (Psalm 97:11)

Righteousness is often costly to the person who keeps to it in all circumstances, but in the end it will bear its own expenses and return an infinite profit. A holy life is like sowing seed: much is going out, and apparently it is buried in the soil, never to be gathered up again. We are mistaken when we look for an immediate harvest, but the error is very natural, for it seems impossible to bury light. Yet *light is sown*, says the text. It lies dormant. No one can see it; it is sown. We are quite certain that it must one day show itself.

We are completely sure that the Lord has set a harvest for the sowers of light, and they will reap it, each one for himself. Then will come their gladness. They will harvest sheaves of joy for seeds of light. Their hearts were upright before the Lord, even though people gave them no credit for it, and even criticized them. They were righteous, even though those about them condemned them as being too critical. They had to wait, just as farmers wait for the precious fruits of the earth; but the light was sown for them, and gladness was being prepared on their behalf by the Lord of the harvest.

Take courage, brothers! We do not need to be in a hurry. Let us possess our souls in patience, for soon our souls will possess light and gladness.

October 24

Godly Stability

"Then I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; and though they fight against you, they will not prevail over you; for I am with you to save you and deliver you," declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 15:20)

Stability in the fear and faith of God will make a person like a wall of brass, which no one can batter down or break. Only the Lord can make a person like this, but we need such men in the church and in the world, and especially in the pulpit.

This age of shams will fight tooth and nail against uncompromising men of truth. Nothing seems to offend Satan and his seed like firm resolve and decision. They attack holy firmness in the same way that the Assyrians besieged fenced cities. The joy is that they cannot prevail against those whom God has made strong in His strength. *Carried about by every wind of doctrine* (Ephesians 4:14), others only need to be blown upon, and away they go; but those who love the doctrines of grace, because they possess the grace of the doctrines, stand like rocks in the midst of raging seas.

Where does this stability come from? *I am with you, . . . declares the Lord.* That is the true answer. God will save and deliver faithful souls from all the assaults of the adversary. Multitudes are against us, but the Lord of hosts is with us. We dare not budge an inch, for the Lord Himself holds us in our place, and there we will abide forever.

October 25

God First, Then Extras

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

See how the Bible begins: *In the beginning God* (Genesis 1:1). Let your life open in the same way. First and foremost, seek the kingdom of God with your whole soul as the place of your citizenship, and seek His righteousness as the character of your life. As for the rest, it will come from the Lord Himself without your being worried about it. All that is needful for this life and godliness *will be added to you*.

What a promise this is! God promises to add food, clothing, home, and more to you while you seek Him. You look after His business, and He will look after yours. He who is an heir of salvation will not die of starvation, and he who clothes his soul with the righteousness of God cannot be left by the Lord with a naked body. Do away with worried concern. Set all your mind upon seeking the Lord. Covetousness brings poverty, and worry brings misery. Trust in God results in joy and eternal wealth, and the righteousness of God results in a heavenly inheritance.

Lord, I seek You; be found of me.

October 26

Because of Us

*For the sake of the elect those days will
be cut short. (Matthew 24:22)*

*F*or the sake of His elect, the Lord withholds many judgments and shortens others. In great tribulations, the fire would devour everything if the Lord did not put out the flame out of regard for His elect. Thus, while He saves His elect for the sake of Jesus, He also preserves the human race for the sake of His chosen.

What an honor is put upon saints because of this! How diligently they should use their influence with their Lord! He will hear their prayers for sinners and bless their efforts for their salvation. He blesses believers so that they might be a blessing to those who do not yet believe. Many sinners live because of the prayers of a mother, father, wife, or daughter to whom the Lord has respect.

Have we rightly used the remarkable power with which the Lord entrusts us? Do we pray for our country, for other lands, and for the age? Do we, in times of war, famine, and pestilence stand out as intercessors, pleading that the days of difficulty may be shortened? Do we lament before God the outbreaks of unbelief, sin, and wickedness? Do we plead with our Lord Jesus to shorten the reign of sin by hastening His own glorious appearing? Let us get to our knees and never rest until Christ appears.

October 27

His Service, Face, and Name

His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. (Revelation 22:3-4)

Three excellent blessings will be ours in the land of glory:

(1) His bond-servants will serve Him. No other lords will oppress us, and no other service will distress us. We will serve Jesus always, we will serve Him perfectly, we will serve Him without weariness, and we will serve Him without sin. It is heaven to a saint to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in all things. To be acknowledged by Him as His servant is our soul's great desire for eternity.

(2) They will see His face. This makes the service delightful. It is the present reward of service. We will know our Lord, for we will see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). To see the face of Jesus is the greatest blessing that the most faithful servant of the Lord can ask. What more could Moses ask than to see the face of God (Exodus 33:18-23)?

(3) His name will be on their foreheads. They gaze upon their Lord until His name is etched upon their brows. They are acknowledged by Him, and they acknowledge Him. The secret mark of inward grace develops into the public acknowledgement of a confessed relationship.

*O Lord, give us these three things in their beginnings
here so that we can possess them in their fullness
in Your own dwelling place of delight!*

October 28

Sins of Ignorance

It shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance. (Numbers 15:25 KJV)

Because of our ignorance, we are not fully aware of our sins of ignorance. We can be sure that they are many, though, both in the form of commission and of omission. We can be doing in all sincerity, as a service to God, that which He has never commanded and can never accept.

The Lord knows about each one of these sins of ignorance. This should well alarm us since God's justice will require these trespasses at our hand. On the other hand, faith finds comfort in the fact that God knows about each of these sins, for the Lord will see to it that stains unseen by us will still be washed away. God sees the sin so that He can cease to see it by casting it behind His back.

Our great comfort is that Jesus, the true priest, has made atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel. That atonement secures the pardon for unknown sins. His precious blood *cleanses us from all sin* (1 John 1:7). Whether our eyes have seen it and wept over it or not, God has seen it, Christ has atoned for it, and the Spirit bears witness to the pardon of it, and so we have a threefold peace.

*O my Father, I praise Your divine knowledge,
which not only sees my iniquities, but provides
an atonement that delivers me from the guilt of
them – even before I know that I am guilty.*

October 29

Maintain the Difference

I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur. (Exodus 8:23)

Pharaoh has a people, and the Lord has a people. These people might dwell together and seem to progress the same, but there is a division between them, and the Lord will make it apparent. It will not be forever that one event happens the same to all, but there will be great difference between the people of the world and the people of God.

This might happen in the time of judgment, when the Lord becomes the sanctuary of His saints. It is very obvious in the conversion of believers, for their sin is put away, while unbelievers remain under condemnation. From the moment of conversion they become a distinct race, they have a new way of life, and they enjoy new blessings. Their homes from that moment on are free from the dreadful swarms of evils that defile and torment the Egyptians. They are kept from the pollution of lust, the bite of worry, the corruption of falsehood, and the cruel torment of hatred, which devour many families.

Rest assured, tried believer, that although you have your troubles, you are saved from swarms of worse ones that infest the homes and hearts of the servants of the world's prince. The Lord has put a division between you and the people of the world. See to it that you maintain that division in spirit, intent, character, and company.

October 30

Thorough Cleansing

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. (Ezekiel 36:25)

*W*hat an exceeding joy this is! He who has purified us with the blood of Jesus will also cleanse us by the water of the Holy Spirit. God has said it, and so it must be: *You will be clean.*

Lord, we feel and mourn our uncleanness, and it is comforting to be assured by Your own mouth that we will be clean. Oh, that You would make a quick work of it!

God will deliver us from our worst sins. The uprisings of unbelief, the deceitful lusts that war against the soul, the vile thoughts of pride, and the suggestions of Satan to blaspheme the sacred name – all these will be so thoroughly purged away as to never return.

God will also cleanse us from all our idols, whether of gold or of clay. He will cleanse us from our impure loves and our excessive love of that which in itself is pure. That which we have idolized will either be broken off from us or we will be broken off from it.

It is God who speaks of what He Himself will do. Therefore, we know that this word is established and sure, and we can boldly look for that which it guarantees to us. Cleansing is a covenant blessing, and the covenant is ordered in all things and sure (2 Samuel 23:5).

October 31

Immortal until the Work Is Done

*I will not die, but live, and tell of the
works of the Lord. (Psalm 118:17)*

This is a fine assurance! It was no doubt based upon a promise, inwardly whispered in the psalmist's heart, which he seized upon and enjoyed. Is my situation like that of David? Am I depressed because the enemy provokes me? Are there multitudes against me and few on my side? Does unbelief urge me to lie down and die in despair as a defeated, dishonored man? Do my enemies begin to dig my grave?

What then? Will I give in to the whisper of fear and give up the battle, and give up all hope along with it? Far from it. There is still life in me: *I will not die*. Strength will return and remove my weakness: I will live.

The Lord lives, and I will live also. My mouth will again be opened: I will *tell of the works of the Lord*. Yes, and I will speak of the current trouble as another instance of the wonder-working faithfulness and love of the Lord my God. Those who would gladly measure me for my coffin had better wait a bit, for *the Lord has disciplined me severely, but He has not given me over to death* (Psalm 118:18). Glory be to His name forever! I am immortal until my work is done. Until the Lord wills it, no casket can close upon me.

November

November 1

Perfection and Preservation

*Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will
bring it to pass. (1 Thessalonians 5:24)*

*W*hat will He do? He will sanctify us entirely (1 Thessalonians 5:23). He will carry on the work of purification until we are perfect in every part. He will preserve our whole spirit and soul and body complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23). He will not allow us to fall from grace or come under the dominion of sin. What great blessings there are! We can rightly adore the giver of such unspeakable gifts.

Who will do this? The Lord will do this – He who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9), and out of death in sin into eternal life in Christ Jesus. Only He can do this. Such perfection and preservation can only come from the God of all grace.

Why will He do it? Because God is faithful – faithful to His own promise that is pledged to save the believer; faithful to His Son, whose reward it is that His people will be presented to Him blameless (Jude 1:24); and faithful to the work that He has begun in us by our effectual calling (Philippians 1:6). It is not their own faithfulness, but the Lord's own faithfulness, on which the saints rely.

This is a lavish feast with which to begin a dull month. It might be foggy without, but there should be sunshine within.

November 2

Heavenly Wealth

*No good thing does He withhold from those
who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84:11)*

*T*he Lord may withhold many pleasing things, but He will withhold *no good thing*. He is the best judge of what is good for us. Some things are undoubtedly good, and we can have these for the asking through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Holiness is a good thing, and He will work this in us freely. He will gladly grant us victory over evil tendencies, strong tempers, and sinful habits, and we should not remain without this victory.

God will give us full assurance and close communion with Himself, as well as access into all truth, and boldness with power at the mercy seat. If we do not have these, it is from our lack of faith to receive, and not from any unwillingness of God to give. A calm and heavenly disposition, great patience, and fervent love – all these will He give as a result of holy diligence.

But note well that we must *walk uprightly*. There must be no contrary purposes and crooked dealings, no hypocrisy or deceit. If we walk in impurity and sin, God cannot bless us with His gracious kindness, for that would provide an incentive to sin. The way of uprightness is the way of heavenly wealth – wealth so vast as to include every good thing.

What a promise to plead in prayer! Let us get to our knees.

November 3

In God's Time

For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:3)

*M*ercy may seem slow, but it is certain. The Lord, in unfailing wisdom, has appointed a time to send His gracious power, and God's time is the best time. We are in a hurry. The vision of the blessings excites our desire and hastens our longings, but the Lord will keep His appointments. He is never before His time, and He is never behind. He is always right on His time.

God's word is here spoken of as a living thing that will speak and will come. It is never a dead letter, as we are tempted to fear when we have waited a long time for its fulfillment. The living word is on the way from the living God, and although it may seem to linger, it is not really doing so. God's train is not behind schedule. It is only a matter of patience, and we will soon see the faithfulness of the Lord for ourselves.

No promise of His will fail. No promise of His will be lost in transit. It is on the way. What comfort it will speak to the believing ear! No promise of His will need to be renewed like a bill that could not be paid on the day it was due. *It will not delay.*

Can you not wait for Your God? Rest in Him, and be still in unspeakable peace.

November 4

You Make the Trenches

Thus says the Lord, "Make this valley full of trenches."

*For thus says the Lord, "You shall not see wind
nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled
with water, so that you shall drink, both you and
your cattle and your beasts." (2 Kings 3:16-17)*


Three armies were perishing of thirst, and the Lord intervened. Although He sent neither cloud nor rain, yet He supplied an abundance of water. He is not dependent upon ordinary methods, but He can surprise His people with new and unusual methods of wisdom and power. In this way, we can see more of God than ordinary activity could have revealed. Although the Lord may not appear for us in the way we expect or desire or suppose, yet He will in some way or other provide for us. It is a great blessing for us to learn to look directly to God for help rather than to look around for other and lesser ways of help.

Do we have enough grace today to make trenches into which the divine blessing can flow? We too often fail to show true and practical faith. Let us this day be on the outlook for answers to prayer. Just as the child who went to a meeting to pray for rain took an umbrella with her, so let us truly and practically expect the Lord to bless us. Let us make the valley full of ditches and expect to see them all filled.

November 5

What Is Painful Will End

*I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry;
for the spirit would grow faint before Me, and the
breath of those whom I have made. (Isaiah 57:16)*

ur heavenly Father seeks our instruction, not our destruction. His contention with us has a kind intention toward us. He will not always strive against us. We think the Lord is long in His chastisements, but that is just because we are short in our patience. His compassion endures forever (Psalms 136:1), but not His contention. The night may drag wearily along, but in the end it must give place to the cheerful day. Just as contention is only for a season, so the wrath that leads to it is only for a small moment (Psalms 30:5). The Lord loves His chosen people too well to be always angry with them.

If God were to deal with us always as He does sometimes, we would collapse outright and go down hopelessly to the gates of death. Take courage, dear heart! The Lord will soon end His chastisement. You can endure, for the Lord will hold you up and carry you through. He who made you knows how weak you are and how little you can bear. He will handle tenderly that which He has fashioned so delicately. Therefore, do not be afraid of the painful present, for it will soon lead to a happy future. He who smote you will heal you. His short time of wrath will be followed by great mercies.

November 6

Delight and Desires

*Delight yourself in the Lord; and He will give
you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)*

Delight in the Lord has a transforming power and lifts us above the sinful desire of our fallen nature. Delight in the Lord is not only sweet in itself, but it sweetens the whole soul until the longings of the heart become such that the Lord can safely promise to fulfill them. Is it not a blessed delight that God shapes our desires until they are like His own?

Our foolish way is to desire – and then to set to work to achieve that which we desire. We do not go to work in God's way, which is to seek Him first and then to expect all things to be added unto us.

If we will let our hearts be filled with God until they run over with delight, then the Lord Himself will ensure that we will not lack any good thing (Psalm 34:10). Instead of going to the world for pleasure, let us stay at home with God and drink waters out of our own fountain. He can do far more for us than all our friends. It is better to be content with God alone than to go about desiring and complaining about the meager rewards of this life. We may seem to have disappointments for a little while, but if these bring us nearer to the Lord, they are things to be treasured, for in the end they will secure to us the fulfillment of all our right desires.

November 7

True Humility Rewarded

He who humbles himself will be exalted. (Luke 18:14)

*I*t should not be difficult for us to humble ourselves, for what do we have to be proud of? We should take the lowest place without being told to do so. If we are sensible and honest, we will be little in our own eyes. We will shrink to nothing, especially before the Lord in prayer. We cannot speak of our own merit when we are before God in prayer, for we have none. Our one and only appeal must be to mercy: *God, be merciful to me, the sinner!* (Luke 18:13).

Here is an encouraging word from the throne. We will be exalted by the Lord if we humble ourselves. For us, the way upward is downhill. When we are stripped of self, we are clothed with humility, and this is the best kind of garment. The Lord will exalt us in peace and happiness of mind. He will exalt us into the knowledge of His Word and fellowship with Himself. He will exalt us in the enjoyment of certain forgiveness and justification. The Lord puts His honors upon those who can wear them to the honor of the Giver. He gives usefulness, acceptance, and influence to those who will not be puffed up by them, but to those who will be humbled by a sense of greater responsibility. Neither God nor man will care to lift up anyone who exalts himself, but both God and good people unite to honor those who are good and humble.

O Lord, lower me in my own eyes so that I may rise in You.

November 8

The Magnitude of Grace

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9 KJV)

Our weakness should be valued as making room for divine strength. We might never have known the power of grace if we had not felt the weakness of nature. Blessed be the Lord for the thorn in the flesh and the messenger of Satan when they drive us to the strength of God.

This is a precious word from our Lord's own lips. It has made me laugh for joy. God's grace is enough for me! I should think it is. Is not the sky enough for the bird and the ocean enough for the fish? The All-Sufficient One is sufficient for my greatest need. He who is sufficient for earth and heaven is certainly able to meet the case of one poor worm like me.

Let us, then, fall back upon our God and His grace. If He does not remove our grief, He will enable us to bear it. His strength will be poured into us until the worm will thresh the mountains, and a nothing will be victor over all the high and mighty ones (Isaiah 41:14-15). It is better for us to have God's strength than our own, for if we were a thousand times as strong as we are, it would amount to nothing in the face of the enemy; and if we could be weaker than we are, which is hardly possible, we could still do all things through Christ (Philippians 4:13).

November 9

Necessary Knowledge

"Then they will know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are My people," declares the Lord God. (Ezekiel 34:30)

To be the Lord's own people is a great blessing, but to know that we are such is a comfortable blessing. It is one thing to hope that God is with us, and it is another thing to know that He is so. Faith saves us, but assurance satisfies us. We take God to be our God when we believe in Him, but we get joy from Him when we know that He is ours and that we are His. No believer should be content with hoping and trusting. We should ask the Lord to lead us on to full assurance so that matters of hope will become matters of certainty.

It is when we enjoy covenant blessings and see our Lord Jesus raised up for us as a plant of renown (Ezekiel 34:29) that we come to a clear knowledge of the favor of God toward us. Not by law, but by grace we learn that we are the Lord's people. Let us always turn our eyes in the direction of free grace. Assurance of faith can never come by the works of the law. It is a biblical quality and can only reach us in a gospel way. Let us not look within. Let us look to the Lord alone. As we see Jesus, we will see our salvation.

Lord, send us such a powerful surge of Your love that we will be carried beyond the mire of doubt and fear.

November 10

Walk without Stumbling

He will not allow your foot to slip. (Psalm 121:3)

*I*f the Lord will not allow it, neither men nor devils can do it. They would greatly rejoice if they could give us a disgraceful fall, drive us from our position, and bury us out of memory! They could do this to their heart's content if it were not for one obstacle, and only one: the Lord will not allow it; and if He does not allow it, it will not happen.

The way of life is like traveling among the Alps. Along the mountain path, the potential is always there for one's feet to slip. Where the way is high and we can become lightheaded, the feet can soon slide. There are spots that are as smooth as glass, and others that are rough with loose stones – and in either of these, it is difficult to avoid a fall.

He who throughout life is enabled to keep himself upright and to walk without stumbling has the best of reasons for gratitude. With pitfalls and dangers, weak knees, weary feet, and clever enemies, no child of God would stand firm for an hour if it were it not for the faithful love that will not allow his foot to be moved.

Amidst a thousand snares I stand
Upheld and guarded by Your hand;
That hand unseen will hold me still,
And lead me to Your holy hill.¹⁵

15 This is from an Isaac Watts hymn that begins with "With all my powers of heart and tongue."

November 11

The Lord's Freeman

For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Romans 6:14)

*S*in will reign if it can. It is not satisfied with any place less than the throne of the heart. We sometimes fear that it will conquer us, and then we cry unto the Lord, *Do not let any iniquity have dominion over me* (Psalm 119:133). This is His comforting answer: *Sin shall not be master over you*. It may attack you and even wound you, but it will never establish sovereignty over you.

If we were under the law, our sin would gather strength and hold us under its power, for it is the punishment of sin that we fall under the power of sin. Since we are under the covenant of grace, though, we are secured against departing from the living God by the sure declaration of the covenant. Grace is promised to us by which we are restored from our wanderings, cleansed from our impurities, and set free from the chains of addiction.

We would have to lie down in despair and be content to serve the Egyptians (Exodus 14:12) if we were still living as slaves working for eternal life; but since we are the Lord's freemen, we take courage to fight against our corruptions and temptations, being assured that sin will never bring us under its rule again. God Himself *gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Corinthians 15:57), to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen (Galatians 1:5).

November 12

Sanctified Souls Are Satisfied

*"My people will be satisfied with My goodness,"
declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 31:14)*

*Note the My that appears twice: My people will be satisfied with
My goodness.*

The kind of people who are satisfied with God are marked as God's own. He is pleased with them, for they are pleased with Him. They call Him their God, and He calls them His people. He is satisfied to take them as His own, and they are satisfied with Him for their portion. There is a mutual communion of delight between God's Israel and Israel's God.

These people are satisfied. This is a wonderful thing. Very few of the children of men are ever satisfied, no matter what their situation in life is. They have eaten the horse-leech, and it continually cries, "Give," "Give" (Proverbs 30:15). Only sanctified souls are satisfied souls. God Himself must both convert us and content us.

It is no wonder that the Lord's people are satisfied with the goodness of their Lord. In Him is goodness without mixture, generosity without limit, mercy without rebuke, love without change, and blessing without holding anything back. If God's goodness does not satisfy us, what will? What! Are we still complaining? Certainly there is a wrong desire within us if it is one that God's goodness does not satisfy.

Lord, I am satisfied. Blessed be Your name.

November 13

The Unfailing Watch

*Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither
slumber nor sleep. (Psalm 121:4)*

The Lord is the Keeper of Israel. He never sleeps nor even gets tired in the least. He never fails to watch the house and the heart of His people. This is a sufficient reason for us to rest in perfect peace. Alexander the Great said that he slept because his friend, the Macedonian general Parmenio, kept watch. How much more can we sleep because our God guards us!

Behold is used here to call our attention to the comforting truth. Israel, when he had a stone for his pillow, fell asleep; but His God was awake and came in a vision to His servant. When we lie defenseless, the Lord Himself will cover our head.

The Lord keeps His people as a rich man guards his treasure, as a captain guards a city with a garrison, and as a sentry keeps watch over his ruler. No one can harm those who are in such keeping. Let me put my soul into God's dear hands. He never forgets us. He never stops actively caring for us. He never finds Himself unable to watch over us.

*O my Lord, keep me so that I do not wander and
fall and perish. Keep me so that I can keep Your
commandments. By Your watchful care, prevent
me from sleeping like the sluggard and from
perishing like those who sleep the sleep of death.*

November 14

The Name to Use

If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:14)

*W*hat a wide promise! Anything! Whether large or small, all my needs are covered by that word *anything*. Come and be free at the mercy seat, and hear your Lord saying to you, *Open Your mouth wide and I will fill it* (Psalm 81:10).

What a wise promise! We are always to ask in the name of Jesus. While this encourages us, it also honors Him. This is a constant plea. Occasionally when our prayer seems to be hindered and lacking hope, especially at those times when we do not seem as near to God, we should remember that at those times, the name of Jesus is as mighty at the throne as ever, and we can plead His name with full assurance.

What an instructive prayer! I should not ask for anything to which I cannot put Christ's hand and seal. I dare not use my Lord's name with a selfish or self-willed prayer. I may only use my Lord's name with prayers that He would Himself pray if He were in my situation. It is a great privilege to be authorized to ask in the name of Jesus as if Jesus Himself asked, but our love to Him will never allow us to use His name where He would not have used it.

Am I asking for that which Jesus approves? Do I dare to put His seal to my prayer? If so, then I have that which I seek from the Father.

November 15

Limitless Riches

My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

*P*aul's God is our God, and He will supply all our needs. Paul was sure of this in reference to the Philippians, and we can be sure of it regarding ourselves. God will do it, for it is like Him to do so. He loves us, He delights to bless us, and it will glorify Him to do so. His compassion, power, love, and faithfulness all work together so that we are not without what we need.

What a standard the Lord goes by: *according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus*. The riches of His grace are large, but what will we say of the riches of His glory? *His riches in glory in Christ Jesus* – who can begin to estimate how much this is? According to this immeasurable measure, God will fill up the immense chasm of our necessities. He makes the Lord Jesus the vessel and the vehicle of His fullness, and then He bestows upon us His wealth of love in its highest form. Hallelujah!

I know what it is to be tried and tested in the work of the Lord. Faithfulness has been rewarded with anger, and generous givers have stopped giving; but he whom they sought to oppress has not been one penny poorer. Rather, he has been made richer, for this promise has been proven true: *My God will supply all your needs*. God's supplies are surer than those of any bank.

November 16

Weapons Doomed to Fail

No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. (Isaiah 54:17)

There is much rattling and clanging in the forges and blacksmith shops of the enemy. They are making weapons with which to strike the saints. They could not make the weapons if the Lord of the saints did not allow them to, for He has created the smith who blows the coals in the fire. But see how busily they labor! How many swords and spears they make! It does not matter, for on the blade of every weapon you can read this inscription: "It will not prosper."

Now listen to another noise: it is the strife of tongues. Tongues are more dreadful instruments than can be made with hammers and anvils, and the harm that they inflict cuts deeper and spreads wider. What will become of us now? Slander, falsehood, insinuation, and ridicule – these are poisoned arrows. How can we stop them? The Lord God promises us that if we cannot silence them, we will at least avoid being ruined by them. They condemn us for the moment, but we will condemn them in the end and forever. The mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped, and their falsehoods will be turned to the honor of those good people who suffered by them.

November 17

God Never Forsakes

*For the Lord will not abandon His people, nor will
He forsake His inheritance. (Psalm 94:14)*

*N*o, nor will He cast away even so much as one of them. Man might have his castoffs, but God has none, for His choice is unchangeable, and His love is everlasting. We will not find a single person whom God has forsaken after having savingly revealed Himself to him.

This wonderful truth is mentioned in the psalm to cheer the heart of the afflicted. The Lord chastens His own people, but He never forsakes them. The result of the double work of the law and the rod is our instruction, and the fruit of that instruction calms our spirit and steadies our mind, resulting in rest. The ungodly are left alone until the pit is dug into which they will fall and be taken, but the godly are sent to school to be prepared for their glorious destiny hereafter. Judgment will return and finish its work upon the rebels, but it will equally return to vindicate the sincere and godly. Therefore, we can bear the rod of chastisement with calm submission. It does not mean anger, but love.

God may chasten and correct,
But He never can neglect;
May in faithfulness reprove,
But He ne'er can cease to love.¹⁶

¹⁶ John S. B. Monsell, "Mighty Father, blessed Son."

November 18

Clearly Supernatural

In that day the Lord will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the Lord before them. (Zechariah 12:8)

One of the best methods of the Lord's defending His people is to make them strong in inward might. People are better than walls, and faith is stronger than castles.

The Lord can take the weakest among us and make him like David, the champion of Israel. Lord, do this with me! Infuse Your power into me, and fill me with sacred courage so that I can face the giant with sling and stone, confident in You.

The Lord can make His greatest champions far mightier than they are. David can be as the angel of the Lord (2 Samuel 19:27). This would be a marvelous development, but it is possible, or it would not have been mentioned.

O Lord, defend the best of our Christian leaders! Show us what You are able to do – namely, to raise Your faithful servants to a height of grace and holiness that will be clearly supernatural! Lord, dwell in Your saints, and they will be as the angel of God. Put Your might into them, and they will be as the living creatures who dwell in the presence of God. Fulfill this promise to Your entire church in our day, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

November 19

From Obedience to Blessing

From this day on I will bless you. (Haggai 2:19)

*F*uture things are hidden from us. Yet here is a glass in which we may see the years to come. The Lord says, *From this day on will I bless you.*

It is worthwhile to note the day that is referred to in this promise. There had been failure of crops, disease, and mildew, and all because of the people's sin. Now the Lord saw these chastened ones starting to obey His word and build His temple, and therefore He says that He would bless them from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid.

If we have lived in any sin, and the Spirit leads us to purge ourselves of it, we may expect the blessing of the Lord. His smile, His Spirit, His grace, and His fuller revelation of His truth will all prove to be to us an enlarged blessing. We might fall into greater opposition from man because of our faithfulness, but we will rise to a closer relationship with the Lord our God and a clearer sight of our acceptance in Him.

Lord, I am resolved to be more true to You and more exact in my following of Your doctrine and Your commandments, and I pray, therefore, by Christ Jesus, that You will increase the blessedness of my daily life from this day forth and forevermore.

November 20

Hunger Satisfied

For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, and the hungry soul He has filled with what is good. (Psalm 107:9)

*I*t is good to have longings, and the more intense they are the better. The Lord will satisfy the longings of the soul, no matter how intense and all-absorbing they may be. Let us greatly long, for God will greatly give. We are never in a right state of mind when we are contented with ourselves and are free from longings. Desires for more grace and groanings that cannot be uttered are growing pains, and we should want to feel them more and more. *Blessed Spirit, make us sigh and cry after better things and for more of the best things!*

Hunger is by no means a pleasant sensation, yet *blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness* (Matthew 5:6). Such people will not just have their hunger relieved with a little food, but they will be filled. They will not be filled with just any sort of bread, but their diet will be worthy of their good Lord, for they will be filled with goodness by God Himself.

Come, let us not worry because we yearn and hunger, but let us hear the voice of the psalmist as he also yearns and hungers to see God magnified: *Let them give thanks to the Lord for His lovingkindness, and for His wonders to the sons of men!* (Psalm 107:31).

November 21

The Outward, Upward Look

*Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth:
for I am God, and there is none else. (Isaiah 45:22, KJV)*

This is a promise of promises. It lies at the foundation of our spiritual life. Salvation comes through a look at Him who is *a righteous God and a Savior* (Isaiah 45:21). How simple is the instruction: *Look unto Me!* How reasonable is the requirement. Surely the creature should look to the Creator. We have looked elsewhere long enough; it is time for us to look to Him alone who invites our expectation and promises to give us His salvation.

Only a look! Will we not look at once? We are to bring nothing in ourselves except to look outward and upward to our Lord on His throne, where He has gone up from the cross. A look requires no preparation or intense effort. It does not need wit or wisdom, wealth or strength. Everything that we need is in the Lord our God, and if we look to Him for everything, everything will be ours, and we will be saved.

Come, you who are far away, and look to God! You ends of the earth, turn your eyes this way! Just as in the farthest regions people can see the sun and enjoy its light, so you who lie in death's borders at the very gates of hell can, by looking to Him, receive the light of God, the life of heaven, and the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God and is therefore able to save.

November 22

No Condemnation

*"In those days and at that time," declares the Lord,
"search will be made for the iniquity of Israel,
but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah,
but they will not be found; for I will pardon those
whom I leave as a remnant." (Jeremiah 50:20)*

This is a glorious word indeed! What a perfect pardon is here promised to the sinful nations of Israel and Judah! Sin is to be so thoroughly removed that it will not be found, so completely blotted out that there will be none remaining. Glory be to the God of pardons!

Satan seeks out sins with which to accuse us, our enemies seek out sins so that they can accuse us of doing wrong, and our own conscience even seeks them with an unhealthy eagerness. But when the Lord applies the precious blood of Jesus, we do not need to fear any form of search, *for there will be none; they will not be found.* The Lord has caused the sins of His people to cease to exist. He has finished transgression and made an end of sin. The sacrifice of Jesus has cast our sins *into the depths of the sea* (Micah 7:19). This makes us dance for joy.

The reason for the obliteration of sin lies in the fact that the Lord Himself pardons His chosen ones. His word of grace is not only royal, but divine. He speaks forgiveness, and we are forgiven. He applies the atonement, and from that hour His people are beyond all fear of condemnation. Blessed be the name of the sin-annihilating God!

November 23

Acquiring Perseverance

*The Lord your God will clear away these nations
before you little by little. (Deuteronomy 7:22)*

We are not to expect to win victories for the Lord Jesus by a single act. Evil principles and practices die hard. In some places it takes years of labor to drive out even one of the many sins that defile the inhabitants. We must carry on the war with all our might, even when we do not see much success.

Our business in this world is to conquer it for Jesus. We are not to make compromises, but to exterminate evils. We are not to seek popularity, but to wage unceasing war with iniquity. Unbelief, unbiblical teachings, false religions, alcohol, immorality, oppression, worldliness, and all sin is to be "cleared away."

The Lord our God can alone accomplish this. He works by His faithful servants, and blessed be His name – He promises that He will so work. *The Lord your God will clear away these nations before you.* This He will do by degrees so that we will learn perseverance, increase in faith, earnestly watch, and avoid carnal security. Let us thank God for a little success, and let us pray for more. Let us never sheathe the sword until the whole land is won for Jesus.

Take courage! Go on little by little, for many littles will make a great whole.

November 24

Pardon and Forgiveness

*He will not always strive with us, nor will He
keep His anger forever. (Psalm 103:9)*

*H*e will reprimand us sometimes, or He would not be a wise Father for such poor, wayward children as we are. His rebuke is very painful to those who are truehearted because they know how sadly they deserve it and how wrong it is on their part to grieve Him. We know what this admonition means, and we bow before the Lord, mourning that we would cause Him to be angry with us.

But what a comfort we find in these lines: *He will not always strive with us*. If we repent and turn to Him with hearts broken for sin and broken from sin, He will smile upon us at once. God does not find any pleasure in turning a frowning face toward those whom He loves with all His heart. It brings Him joy when our joy is full (John 15:11).

Come, then, and let us seek His face. There is no reason for despair, or even for despondency. Let us love a God who disciplines us, and before long we will sing, *Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me* (Isaiah 12:1). Be gone, you dreary forebodings, you ravens of the soul! Come in, you humble hopes and grateful memories, you doves of the heart! He who pardoned us long ago as a judge will again forgive us as a father, and we will rejoice in His sweet, unchanging love.

November 25

Mountains Turned to Plains

What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" (Zechariah 4:7)

A mountain of difficulty, distress, or necessity might be in our way, and natural reason sees no path over it, through it, or around it. However, if faith comes in, the mountain immediately disappears and becomes a plain. But faith must first hear the word of the Lord: "*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,*" says the Lord of hosts (Zechariah 4:6). This great truth is a main necessity for meeting the insurmountable trials of life.

I see that I can do nothing and that all reliance on others is useless. *Not by might.* I see that no visible means can be relied on, but the power is in the invisible Spirit. God alone must work, and people and means must be considered as nothing. If the Almighty God takes up the concerns of His people, then great mountains are nothing. He can remove worlds as easily as children throw balls around or kick them with their feet. God can lend this power to me. If the Lord tells me to move a mountain, I can do it through His name. It might be an immense mountain, but even before my feebleness it will become a plain, for the Lord has said it. What can I be afraid of with God on my side?

November 26

Heavenly Transformation

Your grief will be turned into joy. (John 16:20)

Their particular grief, or sorrow, was the death and absence of their Lord, and it was turned into joy when He rose from the dead and showed Himself in their midst. All the sorrows of saints will be likewise transformed, even the worst of them, including those that seem as if they will remain fountains of bitterness forever.

The more sorrow we have, the more joy will follow. If we have loads of sorrow, then the Lord's power will turn them into tons of joy. The bitterer the trouble is, the sweeter the pleasure will be. The swinging of the pendulum far to the left will cause it to go all the farther to the right. The remembrance of the grief will heighten the flavor of the delight. We will set the one in contrast with the other, and the brilliance of the diamond will be even more clearly seen because of the dark background behind it.

Cheer up! In a little while, we will be as glad as we are now gloomy. Jesus tells me that by a heavenly transformation, my sorrow will be turned into joy. I do not understand how it is to happen, but I believe it, and I begin to sing by way of anticipation. This depression of spirit is not for long. I will soon be up among the happy ones who praise the Lord day and night, and there I will sing of the mercy that delivered me out of great afflictions.

November 27

Rest in All Your Goings

*My presence shall go with you, and I will
give you rest. (Exodus 33:14)*

*W*hat a precious promise! *Lord, enable me to take it as my own.*

There are certain times when we may have to move from where we reside or from where we are comfortable, for we do not have a lasting city here (Hebrews 13:14). It often happens that when we feel most at home in a place, we are suddenly called away from it. Here is the antidote for this trouble: the Lord Himself will keep us company. His presence, which includes His lovingkindness, His fellowship, His care, and His power, will always be with us in every one of our changes.

This means far more than it says, for, in fact, it means all things. If we have God present with us, we have possession of heaven and earth. *Go with me, Lord, and then command me to go wherever You want!*

Still, though, we hope to find a place of rest. The text promises it. We are to have rest of God's own giving, making, and preserving. His presence will cause us to rest, even when we are on the move, and even when we are in the midst of battle. *Rest!* What a blessed word! Can it ever be enjoyed by mortals? Yes, we see the promise, and by faith we plead it. Rest comes from the Comforter, from the Prince of Peace, and from the glorious Father who rested on the seventh day from all His works. To be with God is to rest in the most emphatic sense.

November 28

Doing What God Can Bless

*The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns
and in all that you put your hand to. (Deuteronomy 28:8)*

*I*f we obey the Lord our God, He will bless that which He gives us. Riches are no curse when they are blessed of the Lord. When people have more than they require for their immediate need and begin to lay up in storehouses, the dry rot of covetousness or the disease of hard-heartedness is likely to follow the accumulation; but with God's blessing it is not so. Prudence arranges the saving, generosity directs the spending, gratitude maintains consecration, and praise sweetens enjoyment. It is a great mercy to have God's blessing on your safe and on your banking account.

What a benefit is made ours by the last clause! The Lord will bless you in all that you put your hand to. We do not want to put our hand to anything upon which we dare not ask God's blessing, nor would we want to go about it without prayer and faith. But what a privilege to be able to look for the Lord's help in every endeavor! Some people talk about being lucky. Well, the blessing of the Lord is much better than luck. The support of the rich and famous is nothing compared to the blessing of God. Self-reliance is all very good, but the Lord's blessing is worth infinitely more than all the fruit of talent, intellectual ability, or tact.

November 29

Know How to Wait

He who believes in it will not be disturbed. (Isaiah 28:16)

He who believes will hurry to keep the Lord's commandments, but he will not be disturbed, or in a hurry, in any impatient or improper sense.

He will not hurry to run away, for he will not be overcome with the fear that causes panic. When others are running here and there as if their wits had failed them, the believer will be quiet, calm, and careful, and so will be able to act wisely in the hour of trial.

He will not hurry in his expectations, craving his good things at once and right away, but he will wait for God's time. Some people are in a desperate hurry to have the bird in the hand, for they think of the Lord's promise as a bird in the bush that is not likely to be theirs. Believers know how to wait.

He who believes will not be in a hurry by plunging into wrong or questionable actions. Unbelief must always be doing something, and so it works its own downfall; but faith needs no more hurry than good speed, and so it is not forced to go back sorrowfully by the way that it followed recklessly.

How is it with you? Are you believing, and are you therefore keeping steady at the believer's pace, which is walking with God? Have peace, fluttering spirit! Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him! See that you do this at once!

November 30

God Is in the Front Line

The Lord is the one who goes ahead of you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31:8)

*I*n the presence of a great work or a great warfare, this is a text that should help us to fasten on our equipment. If the Lord Himself goes before us, it must be safe to follow. Who can obstruct our progress if the Lord Himself goes before us? Come, brother soldiers, and let us make a swift advance! Why do we hesitate to move on to victory?

The Lord is not only before us, but He is also with us. The omnipotent, omnipresent One is above, beneath, around, and within us. In all time, even to eternity, He will be with us just as He has been. How this should strengthen our arm! Rush at it boldly, you soldiers of the cross, for the Lord of hosts is with us!

Being before us and with us, He will never withdraw His help. He cannot fail in Himself, and He will not fail toward us. He will continue to help us according to our need, even to the end. Just as He cannot fail us, so He will not forsake us. He will always be both able and willing to grant us strength and help until our fighting days are over.

Do not fear or be dismayed, for the Lord of hosts will go down to the battle with us. He will bear the brunt of the fight, and He will give us the victory.

December

December 1

True Walking Posture

He who walks in integrity walks securely. (Proverbs 10:9)

*T*he person who walks uprightly, in integrity, might walk slowly at times, but his walk is sure. He who hurries to be rich will neither be innocent nor sure, but steady perseverance in integrity, if it does not bring riches, will certainly bring peace. In doing that which is just and right, we are like one who is walking upon a rock, for we have confidence that every step we take is upon solid and safe ground. On the other hand, the greatest success through questionable transactions will always be empty and precarious, and the person who has gained success in that way should always be afraid that a day of judgement will come, and then his gains will condemn him.

Let us stick to truth and righteousness. By God's grace, let us imitate our Lord and Master, in whose mouth no deceit was ever found (1 Peter 2:22). Let us not be afraid of being poor, nor of being treated with contempt. Never, on any account whatsoever, let us do that which our conscience cannot justify. If we lose inward peace, we lose more than a fortune can buy. If we remain in the Lord's own way and never sin against our conscience, our way is sure against all who may come our way. Who is he who can harm us if we are followers of that which is good? We might be thought to be fools by those who are fools if we are firm in our integrity, but in the place where judgment is infallible, we will be approved.

December 2

Our Holiest Example

I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. (Psalm 16:8)

*T*his is the way to live! With God always before us, we will have the noblest companionship, the holiest example, the sweetest comfort, and the mightiest influence. This must be a resolute act of the mind. *I have set*, and it must be maintained as a set and settled thing. The right way for the godly is to always have an eye to the Lord's eye and an ear for the Lord's voice. His God is near him, filling the horizon of his vision, leading the way of his life, and furnishing the theme of his meditation. What futility we would avoid, what sins we would overcome, what virtues we would exhibit, what joys we would experience – if we did indeed set the Lord always before us! Let us do so!

This is the way to be safe. When the Lord is always in our minds, we feel safety and certainty knowing that He is so near. He is at our right hand to guide and help us, and therefore we are not moved by fear, force, fraud, or fickleness. When God stands at a man's right hand, that man is himself sure to stand. Come on, then, you enemy of the truth! Rush against me like a furious storm if you want to. God upholds me. God abides with me. Whom will I fear?

December 3

Peace in Any Exposure

I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate harmful beasts from the land so that they may live securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. (Ezekiel 34:25)

*I*t is the height of grace that the Lord would make a covenant with us, for we are weak, sinful, and dying creatures. Yet the Lord has solemnly entered into a faithful compact with us, and He will never turn aside from that covenant. As a result of this covenant, we are safe. As lions and wolves are driven off by shepherds, so will all dangerous influences be chased away. The Lord will give us rest from disturbers and destroyers; the evil beasts will cease out of the land. O Lord, make this promise of Yours good even now!

The Lord's people are to enjoy security in places of the greatest exposure; the wilderness and woods are to be as pastures and folds to the flock of Christ. If the Lord does not change the place for the better, He will make us the better in the place. The wilderness is not a place to dwell in, but the Lord can make it so. In the woods, one feels compelled to watch rather than to sleep, and yet the Lord gives His beloved sleep even there. Nothing without or within should cause any fear to the child of God. By faith, the wilderness can become the suburbs of heaven, and the woods can become the vestibule of glory.

December 4

Covered and Protected

*He will cover you with His pinions, and under
His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness
is a shield and bulwark. (Psalm 91:4)*

*T*his is a humble simile indeed! Just as a hen protects her brood and allows them to nestle under her wings, so will the Lord defend His people and allow them to hide away in Him. Have we not seen the little chicks peeping out from under the mother's feathers? Have we not heard their little cry of contented joy? In this same way, let us shelter ourselves in our God and feel overflowing peace in knowing that He is guarding us.

While the Lord covers us, we trust. It would be strange if we did not. How can we not trust when the Lord Himself becomes house and home, refuge and rest to us?

Once we trust Him in this, we can go out to war in His name and enjoy the same protecting care. We need shield and armor, and when we wholeheartedly trust God, even as the chick trusts the hen, we find that His truth arms us from head to foot. The Lord cannot lie; He must be faithful to His people. His promise must stand. This sure truth is all the shield we need. As we stand behind this shield of truth, we defy the fiery darts of the enemy.

Come and hide under those great wings. Lose yourself among those soft feathers! How happy you are!

December 5

High Places of Defense

He will dwell on the heights, his refuge will be the impregnable rock; his bread will be given him, his water will be sure. (Isaiah 33:16)

*T*he person to whom God has given grace to be of blameless life dwells in perfect security. He dwells on high, above the world, out of gunshot of the enemy, and near to heaven. He has high aims and motives, and he finds high comforts and company. He rejoices in the mountains of eternal love, wherein he has his dwelling place.

He is defended by a bulwark of stupendous rock. The firmest things in the universe are the promises and purposes of the unchanging God, and these are the safeguard of the obedient believer.

He is provided for by this great promise: *bread will be given him*. Just as the enemy cannot climb the fort or break down the wall, so the fortress cannot be captured by siege and famine. The Lord, who rained manna in the wilderness, will keep His people in good supply even when they are surrounded by those who want to starve them.

But what if they run out of water? That cannot happen. *His water will be sure*. There is a never-failing well within the impenetrable fortress. The Lord sees that nothing is lacking. No one can touch the citizen of the true Zion. However fierce the enemy, the Lord will preserve His chosen people.

December 6

Through, Not Engulfed

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. (Isaiah 43:2)

*T*here is no bridge; we must go through the waters and feel the force of the rivers. The presence of God in the flood is better than a ferryboat. We must be tried and tested, but we will be triumphant, for the Lord Himself, who is mightier than many waters, will be with us. Whenever else He may be away from His people, the Lord will surely be with them in difficulties and dangers. The sorrows of life may rise to an extraordinary height, but the Lord is equal to every occasion.

The enemies of God can put dangers of their own making in our way, such as persecutions and cruel ridicule, which are like a burning, fiery furnace. So what? We will walk through the fires. With God with us, we will not be burned; not even the smell of fire will remain upon us (Daniel 3:27). Oh, the wonderful security of the heaven-born and heaven-bound pilgrim! Floods cannot drown him, and fires cannot burn him.

*Your presence, O Lord, is the protection of Your saints
from the varied dangers of the road. I commit myself
unto You in faith, and my spirit enters into rest.*

December 7

Gift of Strength; Peace to Bless

*The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord
will bless His people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)*

David had just heard the voice of the Lord in a thunderstorm and had seen His power in the hurricane whose path he had described; and now, in the cool calm after the storm, that overwhelming power by which heaven and earth are shaken is promised to be the strength of God's chosen. He who hurls the unerring lightning bolt will give to His redeemed the wings of eagles. He who shakes the earth with His voice will terrify the enemies of His saints and will give His children peace.

Why are we weak when we have divine strength to flee to? Why are we troubled when the Lord's own peace is ours? Jesus, the mighty God, is our strength. Let us put Him on and go forth to our service. Jesus, our blessed Lord, is also our peace; let us rest in Him today and end our fears. What a blessing to have Him for our strength and peace both now and forever!

That same God who rides upon the clouds in days of storm will also rule the hurricane of our tribulation, and before long, He will send us days of peace. We will have strength for storms and songs for fair weather. Let us begin to sing at once unto God, our strength and our peace. Let the dismal thoughts be gone, replaced by faith and hope!

December 8

Following Leads to Honor

If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. (John 12:26)

*T*he highest service is imitation. If I want to be Christ's servant, I must be His follower. To do as Jesus did is the most certain way of bringing honor to His name. Let us remember this every day.

If I imitate Jesus, I will have His company. If I am like Him, I will be with Him. In due time, He will take me up to dwell with Him above if, until then, I have labored to follow Him here below. After His suffering, our Lord went to His throne, and after we have suffered a while with Him here below, we also will arrive in glory. The priorities of our Lord's life will be the priorities of ours. If we are with Him in His shame and disgrace, we will be with Him in His glory. Come, take up courage, and put down Your feet in the blood-marked footprints that Your Lord has left for you.

Let me not fail to note that the Father will honor those who follow His Son. If He sees me being true to Jesus, He will put marks of approval and honor upon me for His Son's sake. No other honor can be like this. Princes and emperors can only give a mere shadow of honor compared to what our Father gives. The substance of glory comes from the Father. Therefore, cling to the Lord Jesus more closely than ever.

December 9

The All of Belief

Jesus said to him, "If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." (Mark 9:23)

*O*ur unbelief is the greatest hindrance in our way. In fact, there is no other real difficulty in regard to our spiritual progress and prosperity. The Lord can do everything, but when He says that it will be done to us according to our faith (Matthew 9:29), our unbelief ties the hands of His omnipotence.

Yes, the confederacies of evil will be scattered if we can just believe. Despised truth will lift its head if we will simply have confidence in the God of truth. We can bear our load of trouble or pass uninjured through the waves of distress if we can fasten on ourselves the belt of peace, that belt that is buckled by the hands of trust.

What can we not believe? Is everything possible except to believe in God? Yet He is always true; why do we not believe in Him? He is always faithful to His word; why can we not trust Him? When we are in a right state of heart, faith costs no effort, for it is then as natural for us to rely upon God as for a child to trust his father.

The worst of it is that we can believe God about everything except the current difficult trial. This is foolishness. Shake off such sinfulness, and trust Your God with the burden, the labor, and the need of this present trial. When you have done this, it is all done.

December 10

God Is Our Ally

*If you truly obey his voice and do all that I say,
then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an
adversary to your adversaries. (Exodus 23:22)*

*T*he Lord Christ in the midst of His people is to be acknowledged and obeyed. He is the deputy of God and speaks in the Father's name, and it is our duty to immediately and completely do as He commands. We will lose the promise if we disregard the command.

How large the blessing is for full obedience! The Lord enters into an alliance with His people, both offensive and defensive. He will bless those who bless us, and He will curse those who curse us. God will go heart and soul with His people and enter in deepest sympathy into their position. What a protection this gives us! We do not need to concern ourselves about our adversaries when we are assured that they have become the adversaries of God. If the Lord has taken up our quarrel, we can leave the enemy in His hands.

As far as our own interest is concerned, we have no enemies; but for the cause of truth and righteousness, we take up arms and go forth to battle. In this sacred war, we are allied with the eternal God, and if we carefully obey the law of our Lord Jesus, He will put forth all His power on our behalf. Therefore, we fear no one.

December 11

Trust and Do; Do and Trust

*Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land
and cultivate faithfulness. (Psalm 37:3)*

*T*rust and do are words that go well together in the order in which the Holy Spirit has placed them. We should have faith, and that faith should work. Trusting in God gets us going in holy actions. We trust God for good, and then we do good. We do not sit still because we trust, but we stir ourselves up and expect the Lord to work through us and by us. It is not our duty to worry and do evil, but to trust and do good. We neither trust without doing, nor do without trusting.

Our adversaries would remove us if they could, but by trusting and doing, we dwell in the land. We will not go into Egypt, but we will remain in Immanuel's land – the providence of God, the Canaan of covenant love. We are not as easy to get rid of as the Lord's enemies think. They cannot throw us out or destroy us, for we dwell where God has given us a name and a place.

But what about the supply of our necessities? As sure as God is true, His people will be fed. It is their duty to trust and to do, and the Lord will do according to their trust. If not fed by ravens (1 Kings 17:4-6), or fed by an Obadiah (1 Kings 18:4), or fed by a widow (1 Kings 17:9), yet they will be fed somehow. Go away, you fears!

December 12

A Quiet Heart

In quietness and trust is your strength. (Isaiah 30:15)

*I*t is weakness to be always distressed and worrying, questioning and mistrusting. What can we do if we wear ourselves to skin and bone? Can we gain anything by fearing and fuming? Do we not make ourselves unfit for action and unhinge our minds for wise decisions? We are sinking by our struggles when we could float by faith.

Oh, for grace to be quiet! Why run from house to house to repeat the weary story that makes us more and more heartsick as we tell it? Why even stay at home to cry out in agony because of what you imagine might happen in the future, when those things might never come to pass? It would be good to keep a quiet tongue, but it would be far better if we had a quiet heart.

Oh, for grace to trust in God and to be confident in God! The holy One of Israel will defend and deliver His own people. He cannot run back from His solemn declarations. Even if the mountains should depart, we can be sure that every word of His will stand. He deserves to be confided in, and if we would trust Him in confident quietness, we would be as happy as the spirits before the throne (Revelation 4).

Return unto your rest, and lean your head upon the chest of the Lord Jesus.

December 13

Evening Brightens into Day

*It will come about that at evening time
there will be light. (Zechariah 14:7)*

*I*t is surprising that there would be light at evening, for we know that in the evening it gets dark. God is inclined to work in a way so much above our fears and beyond our hopes that we are greatly amazed and are led to praise His sovereign grace. No, it will not be with us as our hearts are predicting: the dark will not deepen into midnight, but it will suddenly brighten into day. Never let us despair. In the worst times, let us trust in the Lord, who turns the darkness of the shadow of death into the morning. When the required number of bricks is doubled, Moses appears, and when tribulation abounds, it is nearest its end.

This promise should help our patience. The light might not fully come until our hopes are almost gone by having waited all day with no answer. To the wicked, the sun goes down while it is still day, but to the righteous, the sun rises when it is almost night. Let us wait with patience for that heavenly light, which may be long in coming, but is certain to prove itself well worth waiting for.

Take up your parable and sing unto Him who will bless you in life and in death, and in a way that surpasses all that nature has ever seen when at its best.

December 14

Nothing Old

He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

Glory be to His name! All things need to be made new, for they are sadly run down and worn out by sin. It is time that the old garment was rolled up and laid aside and for creation to put on its Sunday suit. But no one can make all things new except the Lord, who made all things at the start, for it takes as much power to make something out of evil as to make something out of nothing. Our Lord Jesus has undertaken the task, and He is fully able to perform it. He has already begun His work, and for centuries He has persevered in making the hearts of people new and transforming society. Ultimately He will make new the whole framework of human government, and human nature will be changed by His grace. There will come a day when the body will be made new and will be raised like unto His glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

What a joy to belong to a kingdom in which everything is being made new by the power of its King! We are not dying out, but we are hurrying on to a more glorious life. Despite the opposition of the powers of evil, our glorious Lord Jesus is accomplishing His purpose and making us, and all things about us, new and as full of beauty as when they first came from the hand of the Lord.

December 15

World Harmony

*And they will hammer their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation
will not lift up sword against nation, and never
again will they learn war. (Isaiah 2:4)*

Oh, that these happy times were here now! Currently, the nations are heavily armed and are inventing weapons that are more and more terrible, as if the main purpose of mankind could only be answered by destroying multitudes of his fellows. Yet peace will prevail one day, and will so much prevail that the instruments of destruction will be beaten into other shapes and used for better purposes.

How will this come about? By trade? By civilization? By arbitration? We do not believe that. Past experience forbids our trusting in such weak methods. Peace will be established only by the reign of the Prince of Peace. He must teach the people by His Spirit, renew their hearts by His grace, and reign over them by His supreme power – and only then will they cease to wound and kill. Man is a monster when he becomes aggressive and violent, and only the Lord Jesus can turn this lion into a lamb. By changing man's heart, his bloodthirsty passions are removed. Let every reader of this book offer a special prayer today to the Lord and Giver of Peace that He would quickly put an end to war and establish harmony over the whole world.

December 16

Divine Expulsion

You shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong. (Joshua 17:18)

It is a great encouragement to one's bravery to be assured of victory, for then a man goes forth to war in confidence and dares to attempt what he otherwise would have been afraid to do. Our warfare is against evil within us and around us, and we should be convinced that we are able to get the victory, and that we will do so in the name of the Lord Jesus. We are not going forth to fail, but to win; and win we will. The grace of God in its omnipotence is set against the overflow of evil in every form, and that is the reason for the certainty of triumph.

Certain sins of ours find chariots of iron in our disposition, our former habits, our associations, and our occupations. Nevertheless, we must overcome them. They are very strong, and in reference to them we are very weak; yet in the name of God we must subdue them, and we will. If one sin has dominion over us, we are not the Lord's freemen. A person who is held by only one chain is still a captive. There is no going to heaven with one sin ruling within us, for of the saints it is said, *Sin shall not be master over you* (Romans 6:14). Rise up, then, and slay every Canaanite, and break every chariot of iron to pieces! The Lord of hosts is with us, and who can resist His sin-destroying power?

December 17

Nearest and Dearest Fellowship

So we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

*W*hile we are here on this earth, the Lord is with us, and when we are called away, we are with Him. The saint cannot be divided from His Savior. They are one, and they will always be one. Jesus cannot be without His own people, for He would be a Head without a body. Whether caught up into the air, resting in paradise, or sojourning here, we are with Jesus; and who will separate us from Him?

What a joy this is! Our supreme honor, rest, comfort, and delight is to be with the Lord. We cannot imagine anything that could surpass or even equal this divine fellowship. By holy fellowship, we must be with Him in His humiliation, rejection, and pain, and then we will be with Him in His glory. Before long, we will be with Him in His rest and in His royalty, in His expectation and in His manifestation. We will succeed as He succeeds and triumph as He triumphs.

If I am to be with my Lord forever, I have a future that is incomparable. I will not even envy an archangel. To be forever with the Lord is my idea of heaven at its best. Not the harps of gold, the crowns unfading, or the unclouded light is glory to me – but Jesus, Jesus Himself, and me forever with Him in nearest and dearest fellowship.

December 18

Defended and Covered

*Like flying birds, so the Lord of hosts will
protect Jerusalem. (Isaiah 31:5)*

With swift wings, the mother bird hurries to protect her young. She wastes no time upon the road when it comes to supply them with food or guard them from danger. It is as on eagle's wings that the Lord will come for the defense of His chosen; yes, He will ride upon the wings of the wind (Psalm 104:3).

With outspread wings, the mother covers her little ones in the nest. She hides them away by using her own body to protect them. The hen gives her own warmth to her chicks and makes her wings a house, in which they dwell at home. In the same way, the Lord Himself becomes the protection of His elect. He Himself is their refuge, their dwelling place, and their all.

As birds flying and birds covering (for the word means both), so will the Lord be unto us, and He will be so repeatedly and successfully. We will be defended and preserved from all evil. The Lord who compares Himself to birds will not be like them in their frailty, for He is the Lord of hosts. Let it comfort us that almighty love will be swift to save and sure to protect. The wing of God is more quick and more tender than the wing of a bird, and we will put our trust under its shadow from this time on and forevermore.

December 19

Afflictions, but No Broken Bones

*He keeps all his bones, not one of them
is broken. (Psalm 34:20)*

The context of this verse refers to the righteous man who is much afflicted: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all* (Psalm 34:19). He might suffer skin wounds and flesh wounds, but no great harm will be done; not even one of his bones will be broken.

This is great comfort to a child of God who is facing trials, and it is comfort that I dare to accept, for up to this hour, I have suffered no real damage from my many afflictions. I have not lost faith, hope, or love. In fact, so far from losing these bones of character, they have increased in strength and energy. I have more knowledge, more experience, more patience, and more stability than I had before the trials came. Not even my joy has been destroyed. I have received many bruises because of my sickness, bereavement, depression, slander, and opposition, but the bruises have healed, and there has been no compound fracture of a bone, or even a simple fracture. The reason is not hard to find. If we trust in the Lord, He protects all our bones; and if He is protecting them, we can be sure that *not one of them is broken*.

Do not sorrow. You are hurting, but there are no broken bones. Endure the difficulty and do not fear.

December 20

Men as Men; God as God

I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies and of the son of man who is made like grass, that you have forgotten the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, as he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor? (Isaiah 51:12-13)

Let the text itself be taken as the portion for today. There is no need to enlarge upon it. Read it, you who are afraid. Believe it, feed on it, and plead it before the Lord. He whom you fear is only a man, after all, while He who promises to comfort you is God, your Maker, and the creator of heaven and earth. Infinite comfort more than covers a very limited danger.

Where is the fury of the oppressor? It is in the Lord's hand. It is only the fury of a dying creature – fury that will end as quickly as the breath is gone from the nostril. Why, then, should we stand in fear of someone who is as frail as we are? Let us not dishonor our God by making a god of puny man. We can make an idol of a person by fearing him too much as well as by exalting him too much. Let us treat people as people, and God as God; then we will go calmly on in the path of duty, fearing the Lord and fearing no one else.

December 21

From Anger to Love

He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:19)

God never turns from His love, but He quickly turns from His wrath. His love to His chosen people is according to His nature; His anger is only according to His position. He loves because He is love; He frowns because it is necessary for our good. He will come back to the place in which His heart rests – namely, His love to His own, and then He will have compassion upon our griefs and end them.


What a fine promise this is – *He will tread our iniquities under foot!* He will conquer them. Our sins try to enslave us, but the Lord will give us victory over them by His own right hand. Like the Canaanites, they will be beaten, put under the yoke, and ultimately slain.

As for the guilt of our sins, how gloriously that is taken away! *All their sins* – yes, the whole host of them. *You will cast* – only an almighty arm could perform such a wonder. *Into the depths of the sea* – where Pharaoh and his chariots went down. Our sins will not just be cast into the shallow waters where they might be washed up by the tide, but they will be thrown *into the depths*. They are all gone. They sank to the bottom like a rock. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

December 22

Immediately Present

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

 help that is not present when we need it is not of much value. The anchor that is left at home is of no use to the sailor in the hour of storm. The money that he used to have is of no worth to the debtor. Very few earthly helps could be called *very present*. They are usually not nearby when we are looking for them, they are far away when we need them, and they are even farther away once we have used them. As for the Lord our God, He is present when we seek Him, present when we need Him, and present after we have been helped by Him.

He is more than present, but He is *very present*. He is more present than the nearest friend can be, for He is in us in our trouble. He is more present than we are to ourselves, for sometimes we lack presence of mind. He is always present, beneficially present, sympathetically present, and altogether present. He is present now if this is a difficult season for us. Let us rest ourselves upon Him. He is our refuge; let us hide in Him. He is our strength; let us surround ourselves with Him. He is our help; let us lean upon Him. He is our very present help. Let us rest in Him now. We do not need to have a moment's worry or fear. *The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold (Psalm 46:7).*

December 27

Precious Things

Of Joseph he said, "Blessed of the Lord be his land, with the choice things of heaven, with the dew, and from the deep lying beneath." (Deuteronomy 33:13)

We can be rich in these same things that Joseph obtained, and we can have them in a higher sense. Oh, for *the choice things of heaven!*

Power with God and the manifestation of power from God are most precious. We want to enjoy the peace of God, the joy of the Lord, and the glory of our God. We value the blessing of love, grace, and fellowship beyond the finest gold. The things of earth are as nothing in preciousness compared with the things in heaven.

The dew. How precious this is! How we pray and praise when we have the dew! What refreshing, what growth, what fragrance, what life there is in us when the dew is around. Above everything else, as plants planted by the Lord's own right hand, we need the dew of His Holy Spirit.

The deep lying beneath. Surely this refers to that unseen ocean underground that supplies all the fresh springs that make the earth glad. Oh, to tap into the eternal fountains! This is an unspeakable blessing. No believer should rest until he possesses it. The all-sufficiency of God is ours forever. Let us make use of it now.

December 24

Over Jordan with Singing

Thine enemies will be found liars unto thee. (Deuteronomy 33:29 KJV)

*T*hat archenemy, the devil, is a liar from the beginning; but he is so very believable that, like Eve, we are led to believe him. Yet we will prove him to be a liar in our own experience.

He says that we will fall from grace, dishonor our profession of faith, and perish with the fate of those who renounce Jesus Christ. However, trusting in the Lord Jesus, we will stay firmly in our way and prove that Jesus loses none whom His Father gave Him (John 6:39). Satan tells us that our bread will fail and we will starve with our children; yet the Feeder of the ravens has not forgotten us yet, and He will never do so, but will prepare us a table in the presence of our enemies (Psalm 23:5).

The devil whispers that the Lord will not deliver us out of the trial that appears in the distance, and he threatens that the last ounce will break the camel's back. What a liar he is, for the Lord will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). *Let God rescue him now* (Matthew 27:43), cries the false fiend, but the Lord will silence him by coming to our rescue.

Satan takes much delight in telling us that death will prove to be too much for us. *How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?* (Jeremiah 12:5 KJV). But there, too, he will prove to be lying to us, and we will pass through the river singing psalms of glory.

December 25

He Came; He Is Coming

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven. (Acts 1:11)

Many people on this day are celebrating our Lord's first coming. Let us turn our thoughts to the promise of His second coming. This is as certain as the first coming, and derives a great deal of its certainty from it. He who came as a lowly man to serve others will certainly come to take the reward of His service. He who came to suffer will not be slow in coming to reign.

This is our glorious hope, for we will share His joy. Today we are in our concealment and humiliation, even as He was while here below; but when He comes, it will be our manifestation, even as it will be His revelation. Dead saints will live at His appearing. The slandered and despised will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then the saints will appear as kings and priests, and the days of their mourning will be ended. The long rest and inconceivable splendor of the millennial reign will be an abundant reward for the ages of witnessing and warring.

Oh, that the Lord would come! He is coming! He is on the road and is traveling quickly. The sound of His approach should be as music to our hearts! Ring out, you bells of hope!

December 26

Trust in God Alone

Peter said to Him, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away." (Matthew 26:33)

You might say that this is not a promise of God. Maybe so, but it was a promise of man, and therefore it came to nothing. Peter thought that he was declaring something that he would certainly do, but a promise that has no better foundation than human determination will fall to the ground. No sooner did temptations arise than Peter denied his Master and used oaths to confirm his denial.

What is man's word? It is as a clay jar that is broken with one quick strike. What is your own resolve? It is a blossom that, with God's care, may come to fruit, but if left to itself, will fall to the ground with the first wind that moves the bough.

Hang only on man's word what it will bear. Do not depend at all on your own resolve. But on the promise of Your God, hang time and eternity, this world and the next, your all, and the all of Your loved ones.

This volume is a checkbook for believers, and this page is meant as a warning as to what bank they draw upon and whose signature they accept. Rely upon Jesus without limit. Do not trust yourself or anyone born of a woman, beyond what is necessary, but trust only and fully in the Lord.

December 27

His Kindness and Covenant

"For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, but My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken," says the Lord who has compassion on you. (Isaiah 54:10)

One of the most delightful qualities of divine love is its abiding character. The pillars of the earth may be moved out of their places, but the kindness and the covenant of our merciful God will never depart from His people. How happy my soul feels in a firm belief of this inspired declaration! The year is almost over, and the years of my life are growing few, but time does not change my Lord. New lamps are taking the place of the old. Perpetual change is on all things, but our Lord is the same. Force overturns the hills, but no conceivable power can affect the eternal God. Nothing in the past, the present, or the future can cause the Lord to be unkind to me.

Rest in the eternal kindness of the Lord, who treats you as a close relative. Remember also the everlasting covenant. God is ever mindful of it; see that you are mindful of it too. In Christ Jesus, the glorious God has pledged Himself to you to be Your God and to hold you as one of His people. Lovingkindness and covenant: dwell on these words as sure and lasting things that eternity itself will not take from you.

December 28

Absolute Assurance

*He Himself has said, "I will never desert you,
nor will I ever forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)*

The Lord has said this several times in the Scriptures. He has often repeated it to make our assurance doubly sure. Let us never harbor a doubt about it. In itself the promise is especially emphatic. In Greek, it has five negatives, each one definitely shutting out the possibility of the Lord's ever leaving one of His people. We can never rightly feel forsaken by our God. This priceless Bible verse does not promise us exemption from trouble, but it does secure us against desertion. We might be called to travel some strange ways, but we will always have our Lord's company, assistance, and provision. We do not need to covet money, for we will always have our God, and God is better than gold. His favor is better than fortune.

We should surely be content with such things as we have (Hebrews 13:5), for he who has God has more than all the world. What can we have beyond the Infinite? What more can we desire than almighty Goodness?

If God says He will never leave you nor forsake you, then be much in prayer for grace that you will never leave your Lord, nor even for a moment forsake His ways.

December 29

He Will Carry Us Home

Even to your old age I will be the same, and even to your graying years I will bear you! I have done it, and I will carry you; and I will bear you and I will deliver you. (Isaiah 46:4)

The year is very old, and this verse is a promise for our aged friends – yes, and for all of us, as age creeps over us. If we live long enough, we will all have gray hair; therefore, we may as well enjoy this promise by the foresight of faith.

When we grow old, our God will still be the I Am, abiding forevermore the same. Gray hairs tell of our decay, but He does not decay. When we cannot carry a burden and can hardly carry ourselves, the Lord will carry us. Just as in our young days He carried us like lambs in His arms, so He will carry us in our years of infirmity.

He made us, and He will care for us. When we become a burden to our friends and a burden to ourselves, the Lord will not leave us to ourselves. Rather, He will take us up and carry us and provide for us more fully than ever. In many cases, the Lord gives His servants a long and calm evening. They worked hard all day and wore themselves out in their Master's service, and so He said to them, "Now rest in anticipation of that eternal Sabbath that I have prepared for you." Let us not dread old age. Let us grow old graciously since the Lord Himself is with us in fullness of grace.

December 30

Loved to Perfection

*Having loved His own who were in the world,
He loved them to the end. (John 13:1)*

*T*his fact is essentially a promise, for what our Lord was, He is, and what He was to those with whom He lived on earth, He will be to all His beloved as long as the moon endures.

Having loved: here was the wonder! It is a marvel that He would have ever loved us at all. What was there in His poor disciples that He would love them? What is there in me?

However, once He has begun to love, it is His nature to continue to do so. Love made the saints *His own* – what a special title! Jesus purchased them with blood, and they became His treasure. Being His own, He will not lose them. Being His beloved, He will not stop loving them. He will not stop loving you!

The text is good as it stands: *to the end*. Even until His death, the ruling passion of love to His own people reigned in His sacred heart. *To the end* also means “to the uttermost.” Jesus could not love them more – He gave Himself for them. Some people read that phrase as “to perfection.” Truly He lavished upon them a perfect love in which there was no flaw nor failure, no lack of wisdom nor unfaithfulness.

Such is the love of Jesus to each of His people. Let us sing a song to our Well-beloved.

December 31

No Stranger in Heaven

*With Your counsel You will guide me, and
afterward receive me to glory. (Psalm 73:24)*

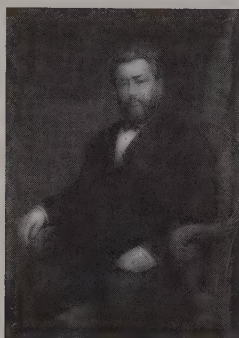
*F*rom day to day and from year to year, my faith believes in the wisdom and love of God, and I know that I will not believe in vain. No good word of His has ever failed, and I am sure that none ever will.

I put myself into His hand for guidance. I do not know the way that I should choose; the Lord will choose my inheritance for me. I need counsel and advice, for my duties are complex, and my condition is complicated. I seek the counsel of the infallible God in preference to my own judgment or the advice of friends.

Soon the end will come. A few more years, and I must depart out of this world unto the Father. My Lord will be near my bed. He will meet me at heaven's gate. He will welcome me to the land of glory. I will not be a stranger in heaven, for my own God and Father will receive me to its endless delight.

*Glory be to Him who will guide me here
and receive me hereafter. Amen.*

Charles H. Spurgeon – A Brief Biography



Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born on June 19, 1834, in Kelvedon, Essex, England. He was one of seventeen children in his family (nine of whom died in infancy). His father and grandfather were Nonconformist ministers in England. Due to economic difficulties, eighteen-month-old Charles was sent to live with his grandfather, who helped teach Charles the ways of God. Later in life, Charles remembered looking at the pictures in *Pilgrim's Progress* and in *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* as a young boy.

Charles did not have much of a formal education and never went to college. He read much throughout his life though, especially books by Puritan authors.

Even with godly parents and grandparents, young Charles resisted giving in to God. It was not until he was fifteen years old that he was born again. He was on his way to his usual church, but when a heavy snowstorm prevented him from getting there, he turned in at a little Primitive Methodist chapel. Though there were only about fifteen people in attendance, the preacher spoke from Isaiah 45:22: Look unto

me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Charles Spurgeon's eyes were opened and the Lord converted his soul.

He began attending a Baptist church and teaching Sunday school. He soon preached his first sermon, and then when he was sixteen years old, he became the pastor of a small Baptist church in Cambridge. The church soon grew to over four hundred people, and Charles Spurgeon, at the age of nineteen, moved on to become the pastor of the New Park Street Church in London. The church grew from a few hundred attenders to a few thousand. They built an addition to the church, but still needed more room to accommodate the congregation. The Metropolitan Tabernacle was built in London in 1861, seating more than 5,000 people. Pastor Spurgeon preached the simple message of the cross, and thereby attracted many people who wanted to hear God's Word preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.

On January 9, 1856, Charles married Susannah Thompson. They had twin boys, Charles and Thomas. Charles and Susannah loved each other deeply, even amidst the difficulties and troubles that they faced in life, including health problems. They helped each other spiritually, and often together read the writings of Jonathan Edwards, Richard Baxter, and other Puritan writers.

Charles Spurgeon was a friend of all Christians, but he stood firmly on the Scriptures, and it didn't please all who heard him. Spurgeon believed in and preached on the sovereignty of God, heaven and hell, repentance, revival, holiness, salvation through Jesus Christ alone, and the infallibility and necessity of the Word of God. He spoke against worldliness and hypocrisy among Christians, and against Roman Catholicism, ritualism, and modernism.

One of the biggest controversies in his life was known as the "Down-Grade Controversy." Charles Spurgeon believed that some pastors of his time were "down-grading" the faith by compromising with the world or the new ideas of the age. He said that some pastors were denying the inspiration of the Bible, salvation by faith alone, and the truth of the Bible in other areas, such as creation. Many pastors who believed what Spurgeon condemned were not happy about this, and Spurgeon eventually resigned from the Baptist Union.

Despite some difficulties, Spurgeon became known as the "Prince

of Preachers.” He opposed slavery, started a pastors’ college, opened an orphanage, led in helping feed and clothe the poor, had a book fund for pastors who could not afford books, and more.

Charles Spurgeon remains one of the most published preachers in history. His sermons were printed each week (even in the newspapers), and then the sermons for the year were re-issued as a book at the end of the year. The first six volumes, from 1855-1860, are known as *The Park Street Pulpit*, while the next fifty-seven volumes, from 1861-1917 (his sermons continued to be published long after his death), are known as *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. He also oversaw a monthly magazine-type publication called *The Sword and the Trowel*, and Spurgeon wrote many books, including *Lectures to My Students*, *All of Grace*, *Around the Wicket Gate*, *Advice for Seekers*, *John Ploughman’s Talks*, *The Soul Winner*, *Words of Counsel for Christian Workers*, *Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith*, *Morning and Evening*, his autobiography, and more, including some commentaries, such as his twenty-year study on the Psalms – *The Treasury of David*.

Charles Spurgeon often preached ten times a week, preaching to an estimated ten million people during his lifetime. He usually preached from only one page of notes, and often from just an outline. He read about six books each week. During his lifetime, he had read *The Pilgrim’s Progress* through more than one hundred times. When he died, his personal library consisted of more than 12,000 books. However, the Bible always remained the most important book to him.

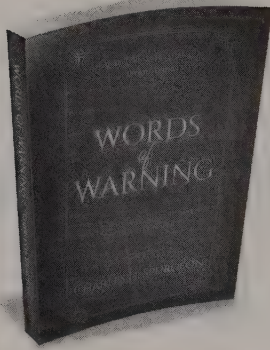
Spurgeon was able to do what he did in the power of God’s Holy Spirit because he followed his own advice – he met with God every morning before meeting with others, and he continued in communion with God throughout the day.

Charles Spurgeon suffered from gout, rheumatism, and some depression, among other health problems. He often went to Menton, France, to recuperate and rest. He preached his final sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on June 7, 1891, and died in France on January 31, 1892, at the age of fifty-seven. He was buried in Norwood Cemetery in London.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon lived a life devoted to God. His sermons and writings continue to influence Christians all over the world.

Other Charles H. Spurgeon Titles

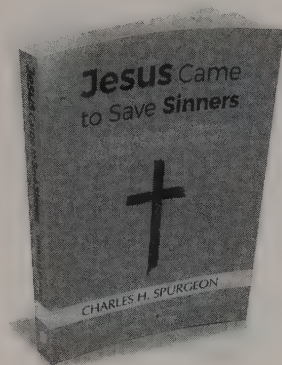




Words of Warning,
by Charles H. Spurgeon

This book, *Words of Warning*, is an analysis of people and the gospel of Christ. Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Charles H. Spurgeon sheds light on the many ways people may refuse to come to Christ, but he also shines a brilliant light on how we can be saved. Unsaved or wavering individuals will be convicted, and if they allow it, they will be led to Christ. Sincere Christians will be happy and blessed as they consider the great salvation with which they have been saved.

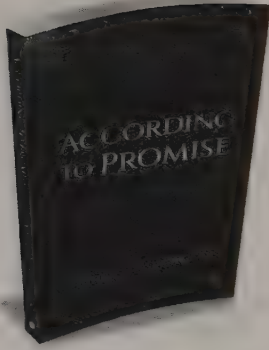
Available where books are sold.



Jesus Came to Save Sinners, by Charles H. Spurgeon

This is a heart-level conversation with you, the reader. Every excuse, reason, and roadblock for not coming to Christ is examined and duly dealt with. If you think you may be too bad, or if perhaps you really are bad and you sin either openly or behind closed doors, you will discover that life in Christ is for you too. You can reject the message of salvation by faith, or you can choose to live a life of sin after professing faith in Christ, but you cannot change the truth as it is, either for yourself or for others. As such, it behooves you and your family to embrace truth, claim it for your own, and be genuinely set free for now and eternity. Come and embrace this free gift of God, and live a victorious life for Him.

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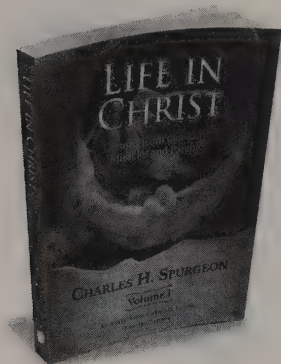


According to Promise,
by Charles H. Spurgeon

The first part of this book is meant to be a sieve to separate the chaff from the wheat. Use it on your own soul. It may be the most profitable and beneficial work you have ever done. He who looked into his accounts and found that his business was losing money was saved from bankruptcy.

The second part of this book examines God's promises to His children. The promises of God not only exceed all precedent, but they also exceed all imitation. No one has been able to compete with God in the language of liberality. The promises of God are as much above all other promises as the heavens are above the earth.

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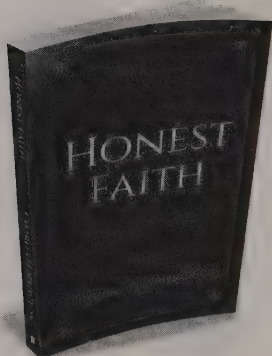


Life in Christ (Vol. 1),
by Charles H. Spurgeon

Men who were led by the hand or groped their way along the wall to reach Jesus were touched by his finger and went home without a guide, rejoicing that Jesus Christ had opened their eyes. Jesus is still able to perform such miracles. And, with the power of the Holy Spirit, his Word will be expounded and we'll watch for the signs to follow, expecting to see them at once. Why shouldn't those who read this be blessed with the light of heaven? This is my heart's inmost desire.

– Charles H. Spurgeon

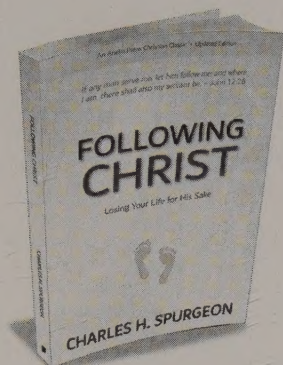
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Honest Faith, by Charles H. Spurgeon

The paragraphs of this little book are not supposed to be an argument. It was not my aim to convince an opponent but to assist a friend. How I have personally threaded the labyrinth of life thus far may be of helpful interest to some other soul who is in a maze. I hope that these pages will assist some true heart to say "he fought his doubts and gather'd strength." Let no man's heart fail him, for the prevalent skepticisms of today are but "spectres of the mind." Face them, and they fly.

Available where books are sold.



Following Christ, by Charles H. Spurgeon

You cannot have Christ if you will not serve Him. If you take Christ, you must take Him in all His qualities. You must not simply take Him as a Friend, but you must also take Him as your Master. If you are to become His disciple, you must also become His servant. God-forbid that anyone fights against that truth. It is certainly one of our greatest delights on earth to serve our Lord, and this is to be our joyful vocation even in heaven itself: *His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face* (Revelation 22:3-4).

Available where books are sold.

*Not one of the good promises which
the Lord had made to the house of
Israel failed; all came to pass.*

– JOSHUA 21:45

Faith's Checkbook is a one-year devotional meant to encourage you to take God at His Word – to take hold of God's promises by faith. Each day you will be presented with a specific promise from the Bible, along with accompanying exhortation by Charles Spurgeon.

This is your “spiritual checkbook,” if you will. God's bank account of provision is ample, and it cannot be overdrawn. Every situation you might face is equally met with a promise that, if accepted, will sufficiently see you through.



“God has given no promise that He will not redeem. He does not offer hope that He will not fulfill. To help my brethren believe this, I have prepared this little volume.”

– CHARLES H. SPURGEON



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